

File Management

Objectives:

On completion, you will be able to:

- State the parts of a file
- Arrange the Note file and Current file
- Describe the procedure for
 - referencing
 - flagging
 - linking of files

File Management

In government any paper received is to be treated with care and proper reply communicated since they deal with the needs of the public. They have to be dealt in accordance with rules and not to our whims and fancies. The procedure is that they should be first kept in a file to facilitate a decision on the reply given to him/her.

What is a File?

File is a collection of papers in a flat file case on a specific subject matter. It has a number for identification purpose. It consists of correspondence portion and notes portion. Correspondence portion contains all currents (incoming written communication) and office copy of outgoing written communications. The process sheet containing the written remarks of the dealing assistant and above for arriving at a decision are filed in the notes portion.

Parts of a File

A file consists two parts i.e. Current file and Note file.

Before starting a file whenever a current is received the assistant should carefully go through it and see whether any previous correspondence is available. For this purpose he/she has to consult both the index and personal register. It is very important. If not checked there is a possibility of treating it as a new case when already there exists a file. This will not only duplicate the work but may cause confusion also. You should remember that before registering the current the study of it should be done. Based on the study you decide whether it is a new case or old case.

Current File -Tagging of currents:

As soon currents are received, the communications relating to new cases should be taken separately and each new case arranged on a flat file. For arrangement of the current file, the first and foremost thing is to punch the current. The purpose is that all papers received in the current file should be neatly tagged together to see that they are at one place and not mis placed. How to punch? In many offices people use the file tags and make holes to the papers with the metal attaches of the tag. In some other places people tear the paper with fingers to attach the tag. Doing like this will spoil the paper and such practices should not be done. The best way is to keep a **single punch** and make holes with it. It is always better that the hole to the paper be made on the left hand side top giving one inch space from the side and top. The purpose of punching the paper is to see that the papers can be turned freely when the file is used. Since all papers are punched at the same place i.e. the top corner when the papers are tagged it will be tight bundle.

Fly Leaf

To distinguish the current and note files, a blue fly leaf should be attached to the current file on the top. It should be marked "Current file". Nothing should be written on this fly leaf as it can be removed once the action in the file is completed and used in another file.

Arrangement of papers

All papers in the current file must be arranged in chronological order. The current received first takes the top place in the file. It is to say that papers are arranged in the order of the dates on which they are received. Supposing that you have received four currents in the file on 1.10.2000; 12.12.2000; 3.1.2001 and 5.2.2001, the papers should arranged in the same order. Now on the top of the file, you will have the letter dt.1/10/2000 and the others down. The arrangement is upside down.

If books, maps etc. are received they should be separated from the current and kept separately immediately underneath the current file. They should not be tagged with the current file.

Page Numbering

All the papers in the current file should be numbered in red ink. Both sides of the page should be numbered. Even there is no written matter on the backside of a page it should be numbered. Normally it is found that people give numbers as 1,3,5.... Etc. which is not correct.

Note File

Note file will be separate from the current file. The general principle is that no notes must be written on the currents except in very simple cases. Note must be written on both sides of the paper prescribed for the purpose. What is the prescribed format? The format is of two types:

1. Half margin (margin half of the width of the paper)
2. One third margin (margin one third of the width of the paper)

Why such half of the paper or one third of the paper should be left as margin in the note file?

Half margin

Half margin is used only when the subject dealt with invites marginal comments or orders. i.e. when orders have to be passed on a number of points in a case dealing with revision of rules etc. On subjects like this there may be need for continuous orders on various points. The note file from first to last should be run in the same fashion.

One-third margin

One-third margin is used in all other cases excepting the above. It is also to be continuous from first to last.

Right and Left Margins

Besides the half and one third margins in the note, the margin should be given on the left side of page one and right side on the second page. This is to facilitate stitching the record. Once the file is disposed it is stitched like a book. When this is done if both sides margin is given at the same place some portion of the note will go in to the stitches. By giving margin at left and right sides this is avoided.

Page numbering

Similar to the current file page numbers should be given to all the pages in the note file. The note file and current file are separate and page numbers should be given separately. Unlike in current file, black ink should be used to give page numbers in the note file. The same principle of both side numbering should be followed irrespective of whether the page written or blank.

Para numbering

The file number i.e. the current number is given on the right side top of the note file. Subject and references will be given leaving some space from the margin. We will discuss in

detail about subject and reference in the next paragraphs and in module 3 where we will be discussing about noting and drafting.

After the subject and references the office note follows. The Note should be divided into convenient paragraphs and each Para should be numbered. This is a continuous number. Even the marginal orders given by the officer should be numbered.

Referencing

Whenever a note is put up, proper referencing should be done.

Whether a new case or old case for disposing it you may need some previous references, rules, regulations, Government orders, Codes and manuals etc. Whenever any of these are put up as reference in the file, they should be properly referenced.

Current File/Note File

A reference to every paper in the current i.e. the incoming communication should be noted in the margin of the current with pencil.

Whenever material in the current file or note file of the same file is quoted for reference the page number of the current file, page and Para number of the note file should be indicated in pencil in the margin of the note file. No flag should be kept to the current or note file of the same file.

Disposals

Similarly whenever a record file is put up no flag should be kept to the current or note file of the disposal. Only page numbers of current file and para and page number of the disposal indicated.

Stock File

Stock file is the one in which all important orders of the government or the department are stocked subject wise. Whenever stock file is put up for reference, page number of the Government or other order referred to in to note should be indicated in pencil in the margin of the note.

Codes and Manuals

Whenever codes and manuals are put up to support the note page rule number to be indicated in the note and reference made in the margin of the note file showing the page number in which the particular rule is available in the code or manual.

3.5. Flagging

Whenever a disposal is kept for reference it should be flagged. For flagging paper fasteners should be used. Attaching flags with pins is not permitted generally. Flags should be indicated in Alphabetical order as A, B,C etc. Care should be taken to see that no alphabet comes second time. Further care should be taken to see that the flags are kept in such a way that catches the eye. Flags should be attached as given below:

Disposals:

Every disposal file put up for reference should be flagged. No flag should be attached to the current or note files of the Disposal. Flag is to be attached to the outer docket of the disposal.

Maps/Statements: Maps and statements should also be flagged.

If numbers of flags are attached, flag A should be kept at the bottom, B above, C on B and so on. Care should be taken to see that one flag does not cover the other flag.

3.6. Linking of Files

When it is necessary to refer in one file to another file that has not been disposed of, the two files will be linked. I.e. the file put up for reference will be put up under the other file and the strings of the lower file, not the flaps, will be tied round the upper file. The strings of the upper file will be tied underneath it in a bow out of the way, so that one may not have the trouble of untying and retying two sets of strings. Each file will thus be intact with its note file, current file and reference files, properly arranged on its own pad. The two pads must not be put together at the bottom with the contents of the two files mixed together above them. Files are not to be linked unnecessarily to refer to a paper in one file in order to dispose of the other or when the orders passed on the one will apply to each other.

When files are linked on the top flap it should be indicated as “ Linked File”. If the main file is put up for orders and the other file or files put up for reference the same should be indicated. Similarly the second file whether it is put up only for reference or also for orders should be indicated on the flap.