

Checking of Arrears and Delays

Objectives

On completion, you will be able to:

- Distinguish between delays and arrears
- List out causes for delays and arrears
- Describe the role of various registers in avoiding delays and arrears
- Describe the procedure for checking the registers to check arrears and delays

Delays and Arrears

Each one of us an individual citizen might have experienced some delay in getting our work done in one or the other offices.

Let us see some instances, which people come across in daily life:

1. You were called for an interview by some department, let it be government or private. The specified date and time is fixed. You received the intimation an hour before the scheduled time.
2. Some one in our own office applies for a marriage or medical advance. The amount is sanctioned, but the amount is paid to the individual after the marriage or discharge of the patient from the hospital.
3. In a particular city there was draught and the administration took a decision to supply drinking water to the public through tankers. By the time the decision was taken the monsoon started.

If we look at these instances it is clear that there is some thing missing. What is it? It is Monitoring. The purpose of public service is to meet the needs of the people as effectively and as quickly as possible. To help us in this regard, the Tottenham system provides in built monitoring to check and prevent arrears and delays through maintenance of various registers.

How delays occur?

Delays occur because of poor monitoring. Monitoring is being done by maintenance and checking of various registers and returns in an office.

The activity in any office starts when tappal is received. If someone wants to control delays, care should be taken at this stage. You may notice that in all offices tappal is sent to the head of office once in day or twice for administrative convenience. If the Head of the office is not there, the authorized officer should attend to this duty. Starting from the stage of receipt of tappal to dispatch of the communication one has to take care about the delays. We are using the words 'Delays' and 'Arrears' very frequently. What do they mean?

DELAY: "The length of time between the moment when something should start and the moment it actually does start"

"To wait until a later time to do something"

The word also refers to Detain, hold, keep etc., if you look at the above meanings, it refers to the starting of a particular work and the actual starting time. The length of time between these two is the delay. If we relate it with the examples given above, it is clear that delays are mainly due to ineffective monitoring.

How Arrears occur?

ARREARS: The dictionary meaning is: "Be in arrears"

"If someone is in arrears or if their payments are in arrears, they are late in paying something that they should pay regularly"

This normally refers to financial matters such as paying the rent, bills etc. If the word pay or paying is replaced with 'do' or 'doing', you notice that the word "Arrears" refers to doing a thing late. Normally in government offices we maintain the arrear lists in respect of certain activities.

If any assistant or a section is looking after a particular subject the initial delay to put up a paper leads to delay in the particular case. If such delays are there in many cases the entire activity of the section or the assistant becomes delayed. Such all delays become the arrear list.

Registers to be maintained

Many registers are prescribed in the Tottenham system. It is necessary to monitor and check some important registers to prevent arrears and delays.

Inward Register: You know that all tappals received in the office are entered in this register and then distributed to the dealing hands. It is necessary that the office

responsible to open the tappals to check up everyday whether: (1) all the tappals received on a particular day are entered in the register on that day itself. (2) All currents are distributed and acknowledged by the dealing hands.

It is important to note that any activity if delayed at the starting itself, the dealy continues till the end. Further adequate care should also be taken about the frequently received reminders. This is an indication of delay in our office.

Security Register : You know the title of the register itself is communicating the purpose of maintaining this Register. Al valuables, such as, Cheques, Demand Drafts and valuables as and when received in the office are entered in this Register and handed over to the concerned without any delay. It is duty of the officer and the person responsible to maintain the register to see that there is no delay in handing over such valuables to the concerned.

Personal Register: Every Dealing Assistant (Junior / Senior Assistant) will have to maintain a Personal Register. The Section superintendent is expected to check the PR once in a Fortnight and the next higher officer once in a month and the next higher officer once in two months and the Head of the department once in a quarter. The schedule indicates the importance given for maintenance of the PR and it's checking. The important areas that are to be checked by an officer are:

1. Whether all the currents of previous year are brought forward to the present personal Register and action taken accordingly
2. Whether all the currents received by the assistants are entered in the PR the same day
3. Is there is delay in receipt of the paper and its submission?
4. Whether all fresh / new currents are entered with full particulars
5. Whether entries in respect of clubbed currents are shown indicating the file number to which the subsequent current is related.
6. Whether entries in respect of clubbed currents are made in the respective columns of the original file in the PR in **columns 8 & 9** of the 10 column or **12, 13 & 14** columns of 15 column PR.
7. Whether there is delay in submission of drafts after the orders are passed
8. Whether reminders were issued regularly at the stipulated time where replies are due from others.
9. Whether disposals were handed over to the record room immediately after closing the file.

Periodical Register: It is maintained to monitor the periodical, their receipt and the date of sending etc., the purpose of the register will be defeated if entries in it are not made and checked regularly. This periodical register is also be checked by the supervisory officers as is done in respect of the PR.

Reminder Diary: The purpose of it is to remind as and when it is necessary to remind some one to send a particular report or return or information to us. If this is not maintained, the purpose itself is defeated. Hence the superintendent should check up the Reminder diary along with other registers but now and then he / she should check it to see whether timely action is being taken or not. Similarly the duty of the dealing hand is to check this diary everyday and put up the reminders.

Arrear Lists: The dealing hand in respect of the seat or the subject being looked after by him or her maintains Arrear lists. This indicates the pending number of pending files in the seat.

Similarly the record assistant maintains the arrear list of records pending and not returned to the record room by the assistants. The list ensures the availability of records in the record room.

Call Book: We will be sending a file to the “Call Book” when action is not required for more than six months duly taking orders for the competent authority. When a file was sent to “Call Book”, it becomes a *disposal* and sent to record room. The Record assistant will watch the date of next action and send the file back to you on time for further action. You may, even yourself, call for the file as and when it is required. Thus even unnecessary delays in submitting the file after six or more months can be avoided.

Fair Copy Register: The purpose of maintaining a “Fair Copy Register” is to monitor the progress and to know about the workload. Depending on the workload, if necessary, make alternate arrangements. By maintaining the register, wherever a fair copy section exists it is possible to re allot the work to other typist. Where no separate section is there it is possible to monitor to type the urgent copies first and ordinary later. It also helps to note the time it has taken to fair copy the approved drafts.

Dispatch Registers: The date of signature on the fair copy and its dispatch is known from the fair copy register if there is a fair copy register. Even if an outward register is maintained the delay in dispatch can be traced.

Record Issue Register: The record issue register indicates to whom a particular record is issued and the date of issue. Based on the register the arrear list is prepared by the record assistant. This helps in avoiding delays in locating the particular record.

Checking of the Registers : The District Office Manual Presents that in each of the fortnights of the month, the Register shall be checked. This starts with the section superintendent who is supposed to monitor the work in the section on a continuous basis. The next one is the immediate gazetted officer. The next level officer and the head of the office or the department as the case may be. The calendar may appear as given below:

Date of Check	Officer	Actual date	Date of Reply
Superintendent	Every 15 days		
1 st Gazetted Officer	Once in a month		
2 nd Gazetted Officer	Once in two months		
Head of the Office or Department	Once in three months		

Every month besides the superintendent at least a gazetted officer does one more check. The checking should be done objectively and purposeful to identify delays in submission of papers, to identify the reasons for such delays and to give guidance to avoid such delays.