

OFFICE PROCEDURE

Outline of Presentation

- What is Office?
- What is Procedure?
- Why is Office Procedure Important?
- How does work flow in Office?
- Receipts and diarisation
- Action on Receipts – Examination
 - Channel of Submission
 - Level of Disposal
 - Filing System
 - Direct Submission
 - Oral Instructions
 - Oral Discussions
 - Aids to Processing- SPS, Guard File, Standing Note, Precedent Book, Reference Folders

What is Office ?

- Is a work place where teams of people are engaged in an assigned work, mostly in a hierarchy , for the fulfillment of objectives of an Organization.
- It is Information Processing Unit facilitating the competent authority to take a decision to achieve organizational goals

What is Procedure ?

- Doing things methodically by following certain procedures laid down with a clearly defined roles and responsibilities for smooth and effective functioning
- Procedure is a set of sequential and logical steps followed to do a job in an efficient and effective manner.
- A set of precise instructions to accomplish a task

Sources of Office Procedure

- Manual of Office Procedure :13th and 14th editions published by DARPG
- Notes on Office Procedure published by ISTM
- Instructions issued by DoPT from time to time (handling of correspondence from MPs)
- Instructions issued within the Department

Some important definitions

- **Department**

Means any of the Ministry, Department, Secretariat and Office mentioned in the First Schedule to the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961

- **Dak**

Includes every type of written communication such as letter, telegram, interdepartmental note, file, fax, e-mail, wireless message which is received, whether by post or otherwise, in any department for its consideration

Definitions

contd.....

- **Central Registry**
- **Classified dak**
Means a dak bearing a security grading (Confidential, Secret, Top Secret)
- **Urgent dak**
Means dak marked 'Immediate' or 'Priority' and includes telegrams, wireless messages, telex messages, fax etc
- **Case**
Means a current file or a receipt

Definitions

contd.....

- **Receipt**

Means a dak after it has been received by the concerned Section/Officer

- **Section**

Means 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.

- **Diarising**

Means registration of receipts in the Section Diary as well as in the diary register with the Personal Staff of Officers

Definitions

contd.....

- **Dealing hand**

Means any functionary such as LDC/UDC/Assistant, entrusted with initial examination and noting upon cases.

- **File**

Means a collection of papers on a specific subject assigned a file number and consisting of one or more of the following parts:

(a) Correspondence

(b) Notes

(c) Appendix to Correspondence

(d) Appendix to notes

Definitions

contd.....

- **Paper Under Consideration (PUC)**

Means a receipt on a case, the consideration of which is the subject matter of the case.

- **Fresh Receipt (FR)**

Means any subsequent receipt on a case which bring in additional information to aid the disposal of a paper under consideration

- **Draft For Approval (DFA)**

Means draft communication submitted for approval

Definitions

- **Note**

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Means the remarks recorded on a case to facilitate its disposal , and includes a summary of previous papers, a statement or an analysis of the questions requiring decision, suggestions regarding the course of action and final orders passed thereon

- **Minute**

Means a note recorded by the President, the Vice President, the Prime Minister or a Minister

- **Minutes**

Is not defined in MoP; but frequently used to connote the record of a meeting/discussion

Definitions

contd.....

- **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

- **Indexing**

Means indicating the subject/title of a file under appropriate catchwords arranged in their alphabetical order with a view to facilitate its location in the event of need.

Definitions

contd.....

- **Citizen's/ Client's Charter**

Document which contains Standard of Services offered by a Department, Information, Choice and Consultation, Non-discrimination and Accessibility, Grievances Redress, Courtesy and Value for Money

Also includes expectations of the Organization from the Citizen/Client for fulfilling the commitment of the Organization

Dak – Receipt, Registration and Distribution

- Receipt of dak
- Acknowledgement of dak
- Registration of dak
- Distribution of dak

Receipt of Dak

- **During office hours** By Central Registry
- Immediate/Important dak addressed to Minister/Officers by name – directly by personal staff
- **Outside office hours**, immediate dak marked by name will be received by the addressee himself – advance intimation
- In other cases, dak will be received by the night duty clerk or by the officer designated
- **E-mails** received will be downloaded centrally in the Computer Centre and forwarded to the C.R.
- Communications addressed to Ministers/officers will be downloaded by them/personal staff
- **Acknowledgement** by signing name in full and in ink with date and designation

Registration of Dak

- Urgent dak will be separated from other dak and dealt with first
- All covers will be opened by the Central Registry, except those addressed to Ministers/Officers by name or those bearing a security grading.
- C.R./IFC will check enclosures and make a note of any item found missing.
- Dak will be date- stamped
- Section-wise/officer-wise sorting of dak

Dak to be registered by the C.R./IFC

- Telegrams, wireless messages, fax messages, telex messages and e-mail messages
- Registered postal dak
- Interdepartmental files
- Court summons and receipts enclosing valuable documents e.g. service books, agreement, etc
- Parliament questions, resolutions, cut motions and references seeking information relating to them
- Unopened inner covers containing classified dak
- Letters from Members of Parliament

APPENDIX 1

Dak Register

Sl. No.	Particulars of dak received		From whom received	To whom received	Remarks
	Number	Date			
1	2	3	4	5	6

Distribution of dak

- Invoice (Appendix 2) for each section prepared and dak along with invoice sent to the section and acknowledged by the diarist
- Invoice duly signed will be returned to Registry and filed section-wise and date-wise.
- Dak distributed and acknowledgement obtained in messenger books/dak register maintained section-wise.
- Dak meant for Ministers/Officers to be acknowledged by their personal staff.

Distribution of dak

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- Urgent dak to be distributed as and when received
- Other dak to be distributed at suitable intervals say 11.AM, 2 P.M., 4 P.M.
- **As far as possible sorting, registration and invoicing of dak to be completed on the day of receipt**
- Night duty staff to attend to the remaining
- Receipts pending noted in a register and signature of the night duty staff obtained

APPENDIX 2

Invoice

Date	C.R/IFC Nos of dak sent	Numbers of items of dak		Total	Signature of receiver
		Registered in dak register	Not registered in dak register		
1	2	3	4	5	6

Action on the dak

- go through the receipts
- Forward misdirected receipts to the concerned sections
- Separate those to be seen by higher officers
- Mark himself receipts that are of a difficult nature
- Mark the receipts to the concerned dealing hands
- Keep a note of important receipts in his diary
- Submit the case to the officer who last noted on it when returned by another department

Diarising of receipts

- The diarist will diarise all receipts in the section diary (Appendix 3).

Following will not be diarised:

- Receipts already diarised in computer
- Communications from MPs - separate register to be maintained
- Unsigned communications on which no instructions recorded by officers
- Identical copies of the representations,
- Post copies of telegrams
- petty contingent vouchers (say night duty or overtime claims, etc)
- Routine acknowledgements
- CL applications
- Copies of circulars
- Any other which under departmental instructions are not to be diarised

Appendix 3

Section/Desk Diary for Receipts

Sl. No.	Diary Number	Number & date of receipt		From whom	Brief Subject	To whom marked	File No.	Replied to		No reply was necessary	Remarks
		Number	Date					In Hindi	In English		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

Diarising of receipts in other cases

- Inter-departmental notes, telegrams or any other category to be distinguished from the rest may be entered in the section diary **in red ink**
- Receipts redirected to other sections will also be diarised
- Papers referred to another department will be diarised each time they are received back- previous and later entries will be linked
- 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**
- Section officer will scrutinize the section diaries once a week to see that these are maintained and append his initials in token of scrutiny

Diarisation in computerized environment

- A single diary number will be generated irrespective of where a receipt is diarised
- All exclusions 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
- Papers received back from other department 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 S.O. will generate a status report of the receipts from computer every week to ensure proper monitoring

Diarising of receipts by Personal staff

- **DS and above** – in respective personal section diary
- Envelopes received without contents or with material not marked to any officer should also be diarised with necessary comments
- No receipt will be diarised more than twice
- In the computerised diary system no receipt will be diarised **more than once**

APPENDIX 4

Personal Section Diary

Sl. No.	Diary No.	Number and Date of receipt		From whom received	Brief Subject	To whom marked	Remarks
		Number	Date				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

- 1. Column 1 a running S.No. will be given date wise.**
- 2. Column 2 to 6 will be filled at the stage diarising. i.e. before receipts are sent to officers.**
- 3. Column 7 will be filled after receipts are seen and passed by officers.**
- 4. Subsequent movement of papers, when received back from the higher officers, will also be marked in column 7 after striking off the previous entry.**
- 5. Important instructions received by the officers will be briefly entered in column 8.**

Allocation of disputed receipts

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

Action on Receipts

- 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 so as to ensure longevity of records and easy retrieval of information

Action on Receipts

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General Principles

- An officer will himself initiate action on as many receipts as possible, keeping in view the priority requirements
- Number of levels at which case is examined will be minimum
- Paper work will be kept at an essential minimum

Action on Receipts

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- Least possible time to be taken for examination and disposal of cases
- An officer will aim at optimizing the quality as well as the quantity of work performed by him.
- Simplified and pre-structured formats will be devised for processing routine i.e. repetitive cases. Simplified formats should also be devised for the benefit of the citizen in his interaction with the offices.

Aids to Processing

- **Running summary of facts of a case**

A summary of facts of the case updated from time to time to incorporate significant developments as and when they take place.

Placed below the notes portion to avoid repeated recapitulation of the case through “self contained notes”. This may be termed ‘Self contained Note’ if it figures in the notes portion of the file.

- **Standard process sheet**

A standard skeleton note developed for a repetitive item of work, indicating predetermined points of check or aspects to be noted upon. It makes noting brief and precise

Aids to Processing

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- **‘ Standing Guard File ’** - Compilation consisting of
 - (a) a running summary of the principles and policy relating to the subject with number and date of relevant decisions/orders quoted in margin against each
 - (b) copies of the decisions or orders referred to, arranged in chronological order; and
 - (c) model forms of communications to be used at different stages
- **‘ Reference folder ’**

A folder containing copies of relevant rules, orders, instructions, etc. arranged in chronological order for ready reference.

Aids to Processing

contd...

- ‘ Standing note ’

A continuing note explaining, among other things, the history and development of the policy, procedure and the latest position designed to serve as :

- (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

Level of disposal and channel of submission

- Departmental instructions to prescribe level of disposal for each category of cases
- Should be updated periodically and should also be 'audited' at regular intervals
- To be placed in the public domain
- ARC Recommended that the number of levels for a decision on a file not to exceed three
- In cases requiring Minister's approval,
 - file to be initiated by the DS/Director.
 - should move through JS/AS/SS and the Secretary/SS

Level of disposal and channel of submission

- For addressing cross cutting issues, the Secretary to have flexibility to create inter-disciplinary teams
- Desk Officer -----DS/Director-----JS/AS
- JS can submit cases directly to Secretary/Minister
- AS in large Ministries would function independently in day-to-day administrative and functional matters

Level of disposal and channel of submission

- Clear delegation of authority to the SS to function independently
- Wherever level jumping is there, such cases on its return will pass through all the levels jumped over
- In a computerised environment, the system will provide scope for level jumping

Direct submission of cases by Senior Assistants

- Assistant in a conventional section with more than five years service and at least 6 months in the concerned section may submit cases to the Branch Officer directly
- In appropriate cases, Assistants with less than 5 years service may also be permitted
- Cases to go back through S.O., who may indicate any omission or flaws

Action by dealing hand

- Go through the receipts and separate urgent from the rest
- Enter the receipts in the Assistant's Diary (not necessary in a computerized environment)
- Deal with the urgent receipts first
- Check enclosures; if found missing take action to get it
- Send copies/extracts to other section(s) concerned
- To process in the existing file/open a new file; indicate the file number in the Assistant's Diary
- Assign the receipt page number and a serial number
- Docketing and reproducing the remarks on the notes portion
- With the help of precedents, standing guard files, reference folders etc., locate and collect other files/papers referred to in receipt or having a bearing on the issues raised therein
- Put up the case to the appropriate authority; make a note of the date of submission in the assistant's diary (the system indicates in a computerized environment)

Action by Section Officer

- Scrutinise the note of the dealing hand
- Dispose of routine cases
- Take intermediate routine action
- Where necessary, record a note with his own comments or suggestions
- Submit the case to the appropriate higher officer

Examination by Section

- The line of action on a receipt is obvious / based on a clear precedent or practice/has been indicated by a higher officer - put up a draft/fair communication without any elaborate note
- In other cases, check
 - All statements are correct
 - Point out mistakes, incorrect statements, missing data/information
 - Statutory/customary procedure, relevant law and rules
 - Furnish data/information available in the department
 - Questions for consideration and points requiring decision
 - Precedents
 - Suggest alternative courses of action for consideration

Examination by Officer

- Discussion with staff to decide the course of action in cases
- Self contained note in important problem solving issues
- Comprehensive note by an officer/group of officers for submission to the decision making level
- **Deviation from normal procedures or rules –** responsibility of the decision making authority to record reasons in writing , justifying deviation from the rules/procedures

- **Standard Process Sheet**

For dealing with cases of repetitive nature e.g. sanctioning of leave, GPF advance, HBA, forwarding of applications. No notes recorded in such cases

- **Running summary of facts**

Prepared to facilitate consideration and obviate repeated recapitulation of consecutive noting. Contributes for speedy disposal and placed in a separate folder

Filing of papers

- Papers will be punched on the left hand top corner and tagged into the appropriate part of the file
- Both 'notes portion' and 'correspondence portion' will be placed in a single file cover
- Earlier communications referred to in the receipt or issue will be indicated by pencil
- If file is bulky separate file covers may be maintained for keeping appendix to notes and appendix to correspondence

Filing of papers

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- Routine receipts and issues and routine notes to be placed below the file in a separate cover and destroyed when no longer required
- When file becomes bulky (exceeds 150 pages) it will be stitched and marked “Volume I” further papers to be added in the new volume of the same file
- Page numbering will be made in continuity in the notes and correspondence portion of the subsequent volumes
- On top of the first page of note portion in each volume of the file, file number, name of the ministry/Department, name of the branch/section and subject will be mentioned

Desk Officer System

- General principles governing action on receipts will apply in the functioning under D.O. system also
- The Desk functionary will
 - draft and issue a reply in simple situations
 - submit a draft in other cases for approval/signature of DS/Director/JS, without any elaborate note
 - Take appropriate action after discussions, in case of any doubt
 - Put up a self contained note in case of problem solving cases
- Assisted by supporting staff
 - for dealing with simple cases i.e. issue of acknowledgment, forwarding of papers, etc
 - compilation of data
 - maintaining manuals and reference folders
 - records management

Oral discussions

- Discussions between officers of same/different departments and conclusions reached to be recorded in file
- Policy of government/ deviation from prescribed policy/officers differ on significant issues - confirmation of all concerned to be obtained

Oral instructions by higher officers

- Directions (including telephonic) from officers on matters in which subordinate officer has powers to decide - to be given in writing
- Where it is not immediately possible , the oral directions to be followed by a written confirmation.
- Officers to take action in his/her best judgement while performing official duties.
- When he/she is acting under the instructions of a superior officer, to obtain the same in writing before carrying out the instructions
- Where it is not possible, to obtain the written confirmation at the earliest.
- Where the instructions are not from immediate officer, the same to be brought to the notice of immediate superior.

Oral orders on behalf of or from Minister

- Personal staff to confirm writing the oral order on behalf of Minister
- Oral instructions from Minister/personal staff and confirming to the norms, rules etc – to be brought to the notice of the Secretary
- Oral instructions not in accordance with norms, rule etc. – seek clear order from the Secretary/head of the department on the line of action to be taken
- Approval of Minister taken over phone – confirmation to be obtained on file on the return of Minister to Hqs

Confirmation of oral instructions

- Senior officer to confirm oral instructions given when sought by Junior officers
- Such communications from Junior Officer to be acknowledged by the Senior Officer/personal staff

Checks on Delays

- **Time Limits** – departmental instructions to prescribe time limits for disposal of various types of cases. As a rule no case will remain pending for more than 7 days unless higher limits prescribe for specific types of cases
- **Handling of Public/Staff Grievances** – JS level officer to be designated as Director of Public Grievances, DS/Director level officer as Staff Grievance Officer. To observe every Wednesday as meetingless day.
CPGRAMS
- **Weekly arrear statement** – Appendix 35
- **Monthly statement of cases pending over a month** - Appendix 37

- **Call Book – Appendix 40**
- **Monthly progress reports of recording and review of files –Appendix 41 & 42**
- **Watch on disposal of communications from MPs - Appendix 45**
- **Watch on disposal of communications from VIPs - Appendix 48**

- **Monitoring of Court/CAT cases and implementation of Court/CAT orders - Appendix 49**
- **Register of Parliamentary Assurances – Appendix 52**
- **Check list of periodical reports - Appendix 53 & 54**
- **Review of periodical reports/returns - Appendix 66**

File Numbering System

- Essential for convenient identification, sorting, storage and retrieval of papers
- **Functional File numbering system**
 - ✓ the main functions of the department
 - ✓ The activities in each of these functions
 - ✓ The aspects or operations involved in each of these activities
 - ✓ The factors to be taken into account in each of these aspects or operations
- **File numbering system based on subject classification**

Each section to maintain

 - Standard heads main subject headings concerning it
 - Standard Sub-heads i.e. aspects of the main subject headings

THANK YOU