

CHAPTER-VI

DEALING WITH RECEIPTS, NOTING AND DRAFTING

6.1 Dealing — Dak is received in a Section and marked by the Section in-charge to the Assistants (dealing Assistant) in accordance with work distribution order or exigencies of the situation. Dealing of a receipt is the process of taking action on a communication received and includes preliminary action and diarising, noting, drafting, filing, etc.

6.2 Preliminary action on a receipt — As soon as a dealing Assistant receives the dak (receipts) duly diarised, he/she is required to:

- (i) Go through the receipts and to check that:
 - (a) all receipts given to him/her actually pertain to the work assigned to him/her. If any receipt has been erroneously marked to him and does not pertain to his/her seat, he/she will bring the matter to the notice of the Section in-Charge for marking to the concerned dealing Assistant to whom the receipt will be passed on through the section diarist;
 - (b) all enclosures to the receipts are there and if any enclosure is missing, steps should be taken to ask for it from the sender and in case the matter is of importance, the sender should be contacted telephonically as well;
 - (c) the communications are duly signed and if any letter is unsigned, it should be sent to the sender for proper signatures; and
 - (d) all the communications and their enclosures are legible and in case any page is illegible, then a legible copy of the page should be asked for immediately.
- (ii) Enter all receipts in the Assistant's Diary Register, maintained year-wise on the following proforma:—

Date	Dy. No	Subject	Sender	Letter No.& Date	File No.	Date of Dealing	Date of Final Disposal	Remarks

- (iii) Separate the Immediate/Urgent receipts from the ordinary receipts for being dealt with in accordance with the priority assigned to them.
- (iv) Bring the receipts on the current file on the subject if one already exists and if not, open a new file in the file opening register with the approval of the Section in-Charge. Due care has to be exercised to ensure that new files are not opened unnecessarily. At the same time the practice of dealing all kinds of receipts on 'miscellaneous' files is to be avoided. 'FRs' will obviously be dealt on the file on which the original PUC was dealt. Whether a PUC requires the opening of a new file or whether there exists a current file on the subject should be considered carefully.
- (v) See whether any other Section is concerned with any part or aspect of a receipt. A copy of relevant extract is to be immediately sent to the concerned Section for necessary action through a U.O. reference under signatures of the Section-in-Charge/Branch Officer.
- (vi) Place in the current/new file the receipts in accordance with the procedure prescribed in paras 5.2 and 5.3 of Chapter-V. *All receipts will be placed inside the file cover.*

- (vii) Assign the receipt numbers and page numbers to the receipts in the current/new file in accordance with para 5.4 of Chapter-V. While doing so he/she should check and ensure that the page numbering and serial numbers of earlier receipts are complete and proper referencing has been done.
- (viii) Mark all relevant references (including the page number of the original letter to which this may be a reply) referred to in the receipt. He/she will also, in case the receipt is in reply to an earlier letter issued from the Section, write on that earlier letter '*reply received on (date)—at p—/c*'. This cross-referencing will facilitate the linking of the various items of correspondence relating to the case.
- (ix) Trace and locate all other relevant files required for dealing the receipt, whether current or recorded, with the help of the file opening register and register of recorded files.
- (x) Collect all relevant reference books, Acts, Rules, Regulations and instructions required for dealing the receipt; and finally
- (xi) Arrange, reference and flag the papers in accordance with paras 5.4 and 5.5 and attach label of urgency, as per para 5.18 of Chapter V, wherever required.

6.3 Docketing of receipts — Before the initiation of any note by the dealing Assistant it has to be ensured that the filing of papers, arrangement of papers in a case, referencing and linking of files are in order. The dealing Assistant will note all particulars of a receipt on the noting portion in red ink in the following format:

Sl. No. (R) Dy. No.DatePage Nos.PUC/FR
 (as the case may be) *Letter No.Dated From*

If a senior officer has written an observation on the PUC/FR, this shall be copied out in full with designation and date within quotation marks before initiating the note. For example:

'Please discuss with Director (R) and put up file by 15th sd/- S.G 12.1.99'

If the submission of a receipt has been delayed inordinately, the dealing Assistant should furnish an explanation for the delay in the note itself.

It is the duty of all senior officers from Section-in-Charge upwards to ensure that every file put up is properly paged and docketed, and they must at all times make efforts to guide subordinate staff in the proper procedure.

6.4 Noting — "Noting is the process of providing remarks on a Paper Under Consideration (PUC) or Fresh Receipt (FR) to facilitate' the decision making authority to arrive at a decision. It reduces the time and effort required at higher levels. when one is to refer voluminous material. It also gives an indication of the reasoning process involved. A "Note" includes the precis of a PUC or FR, a statement or analysis of the questions requiring decision, reasoned suggestions on the course of action, or orders passed on the file.

In cases where detailed noting is not necessary, the dealing Assistant will write a brief note in a line or two about the receipt. For example, in cases here a PUC is to be circulated, dealing Assistant will write:

"PUC may be circulated to all concerned, as per draft placed below"

When writing notes it should be assumed that the PUC/FR and the previous notes will be read by the concerned superior officers. The dealing Assistant or higher officials, therefore, need only refer to para no. of the PUC/FR or the serial number or page of previous notes, rather than reproduce them *in extenso* unless it is absolutely necessary. The verbatim reproduction of extracts from or paraphrasing of the PUC, FR or any other part of correspondence or notes on the same file should not be given just to give an impression of contributing to a file.

All notes should be concise and to the point. Excessive noting describing lengthy facts and figures should be avoided. Lengthy notes, if necessary, should be prepared, but with proper paragraphing and in clear language.

If, a running summary of facts is available on the file, this should not be reproduced in one's own note, If the last note on the tile is itself a summary and if some additional point is to be made, a self contained summary should be prepared.

6.5 Noting and responsibilities of Branch/Section — When the line of action on a receipt is clear, or it is based on precedents or the approval of the Section in-Charge has already been obtained on the line of action on a receipt, a draft reply, where necessary, should be put up for approval without much noting. In other cases, the Section shall put up a note.

As far as possible, one note should emanate from the Section. If there is difference of opinion between different sections/dealing hands and head of the branch, it should be settled by personal discussion.

The following points should be ensured by the section with respect to noting:

- (i) facts under consideration should be correct to the best of one's knowledge;
- (ii) mistakes or mis-statements of facts should be pointed out;
- (iii) the correct procedure, statutory or customary, the law and rules, should be pointed out;
- (iv) other relevant facts and figures available in the Secretariat should be provided alongwith precedents containing previous decisions on a similar issue;
- (v) questions for consideration should be stated to bring out clearly the points requiring decision; and
- (vi) a course of action, wherever possible, should be suggested.

In matters pertaining to policy decisions, or complex matters requiring thorough consideration, the note should consist of the following:

- (i) brief background of the case on the noting portion itself or in the form of an Appendix to Notes, but duly referred to in the note;
- (ii) factual position;
- (iii) issues involved or points for consideration;
- (iv) factual position about the 'issues/points with reference to Acts, Rules, Manuals and instructions;
- (v) all possible alternative solutions;
- (vi) what solution seems to be the most appropriate with reasons for such a choice with reference to reasons for rejection of other alternatives;
- (vii) the suggested course of action for the proposed solution and the method/procedure required to be followed for finalisation of the said course of action.

6.6 Use and computerization of Standard Process Sheets — In some Sections including Bill Office, Personnel Section, Establishment (A/Cs) and Budget Section and Establishment (G) Section, etc. where some of the file work is of a routine and repetitive nature and the office note can be formulated into a standard text where only a few blanks have to be filled for dealing with a case. This procedure should be used to save time and ensure comprehensive examination. Such 'standard process sheets' can incorporate 'Check Lists', where appropriate, to ensure that all papers relevant to the case are available. Section-in-charge must identify applications for standard process sheets and encourage their use. 'Templates' containing these sheets should be stored on the computer, data input in each case, and print out taken and used in the file.

6.7 Action by Head of Section — The Section-in-Charge will scrutinise the note of the Assistant/Clerks. In-Charge of Section is authorised to dispose of the following items of work without referring the matter to their divisional officers:

- (i) Grant of casual leave upto three days.
- (ii) Issue of reminders and acknowledgements.
- (iii) Recording of Files
- (iv) Issue of office orders, routine orders and circulars of ephemeral nature.
- (v) Any other case, which by a general or specific office order, Section in-Charge is authorised to dispose of independently.

The Section in-Charge may use his/her name and designation, while signing official communications relating to matters within his/her power. Notwithstanding the power delegated to In-charge of Section for disposal of certain cases and issuing of communications over their signatures, all orders passed by or made in the name of Chairman, Rajya Sabha shall be authenticated by the signature of an officer not below the rank of Deputy Director.

6.8 Scrutiny by Section in-Charge — Excepting cases of secret, confidential or urgent nature which the supervisory officer (*i.e.* Deputy Director/Joint Director) may like to deal himself/herself, all other cases are processed initially by the dealing hands and submitted to the Section-in-Charge. On receiving the file, the Section-in-Charge is required to go through the contents of the receipts, all communications referred to therein and all other linked papers, Acts. Rules. Manuals and instructions added with the case. Thereafter, the Section-in-Charge has to see the following aspects in all cases submitted to him:—

- (i) The dealing Assistant has taken all preliminary steps on the receipt as detailed in para 6.2, completed the short comings and placed the receipt(s) in the correct and relevant file and extracts of relevant paras requiring action by another Section/dealing hand have been given to the concerned Section/dealing hand for further action;
- (ii) The receipt has been duly diarised, placed at its proper place duly serial numbered and page numbered, all communications referred to in the receipt have been referenced and flagged and the other relevant files, if any, have been linked;
- (iii) All data/information required for proper submission of the case has been collected;
- (iv) The file (correspondence portion and the noting portion combined) has not become unwieldy *i.e.*, exceeded 200 pages and if so, the case should be transferred to a new volume;
- (v) Relevant Acts/Rules/Manuals/Regulations or instructions have been added with the case or relevant extracts of the same are added, duly flagged;
- (vi) The note prepared by the dealing hand is in accordance with the instructions on the subject and the draft has been added in fair or in draft form wherever considered proper;
- (vii) The note contains all essential features of the case *i.e.* the issues involved, factual position supported with essential data/information, provisions of Acts/Rules/Regulations/Manuals/instructions/precedents, all viable solutions/suggestions practicable and the best possible course of action/solution with reasons and the procedure for its adoption;
- (viii) In cases where consultation with any other Section/organisation is essential, the note contains complete information;
- (ix) The concluding portion contains complete particulars of the authority whose approval/orders are solicited;
- (x) The dealing hand has put his/her signatures in full, with date, on the left side at the end of the note leaving the sufficient blank margin;

- (xi) The noting portion is page-numbered, all paragraphs in the noting are serially numbered and all the communications referred to in the note are properly referenced; and
- (xii) The File Movement Slip is stapled to the outside of the file, indicating the Section name and designation of person to whom marked.

The Section-in-Charge, after checking the above aspects and finding the case to be in accordance with the Rules, instructions, past precedents and in order can sign in full with date and mark the case/file to the Branch Officer. The marking to the Branch Officer has to be on the left-hand side below the signatures of the Section-in-Charge, leaving the margin blank. The signatures of the Section in-Charge after the note and signatures of the dealing hand imply his/her complete agreement with the viewpoint and suggestions of the dealing hand. It is unnecessary for the Section-in-Charge to give a gist or summary of the case with proposed suggestions in case the note of dealing hand is self-explanatory and nothing new is to be added.

In cases where the Section in-Charge finds that the note of the dealing hand on a case is incomplete or wanting in certain aspects or the suggestion of the dealing hand is not in order and he/she has different ideas/proposals/suggestions to make, then the Section in-Charge may write his/her detailed note below the dealing hand's note, justifying his/her views. At the end of the note the Section in-Charge has to submit alternative solutions with his/her particular suggestion for the best course of action and also indicate the level of the authority whose approval/orders are solicited. The Section-in-Charge has then to affix signatures in full with date and the end of the note, leaving the margin blank. The designation of the Branch Officer to whom the case is to be submitted is to be indicated on the left-hand side of the note-sheet below the signatures of the Section in-Charge.

After the Section-in-Charge has seen and signed the case in accordance with the above, he/she has to complete the File movement slip and affix the urgency label on the case in accordance with the procedure laid down in para 5.18 and then send the file to the diarist for entry both in the Section diary register as also the file movement register (so that the dealing of the receipt on a particular file as well as the movement of the file are recorded). The Section-in-Charge has to ensure that the file is promptly sent to the Branch Officer by the diarist. The Section-in-Charge has to send the files of secret/confidential nature to the Branch Officer in a sealed cover and in all such cases the Section-in-Charge is required to inform the diarist to make the entry in the diary and file movement registers, since the file will not go to the diarist.

The secret/confidential/urgent matters desired to be handled by the Section-in-Charge himself/herself are to be processed, dealt with and submitted to the Branch Officer in the same manner as above on the relevant file, duly referenced flagged and properly arranged with detailed/short notes as the case may be. The signature of the Section-in-Charge, marking to the Branch Officer has also to be on the same pattern as given above, but such cases have to be submitted in sealed covers.

The Section in-Charge has also to see that the type of cases for which powers have been delegated to him/her are finally disposed of by him/her at his/her own level, unless he/she considers that the matter is of such nature as should, be brought to the notice of the Branch Officer.

6.9 Scrutiny and submission of cases by the Branch Officer

6.9.1. Basic Consideration : The Branch Officer (*i.e.* the Deputy Director or equivalent) too is supposed to go through the receipt(s), all communications referred to therein, linked files, Acts/Rules/Manuals/regulations and instructions as are added with the case received by him/her. Normally the cases are received by the Branch Officer duly processed by the dealing hand and scrutinised by the Section-in-Charge except those cases, which the Branch Officer may like to deal himself/herself. At the level of the Branch Officer, the cases need consideration from the following angles:-

- (i) whether the case has been presented in its complete form with all connected papers, files, reference books duly referenced and flagged and whether all the issues involved have been discussed;

- (ii) whether of the various alternative courses of action, the best one has been suggested in the prevalent circumstances and is in order;
- (iii) repercussions of the suggested course of action in the Section itself and other Sections; and
- (iv) in case the proposed course of action/solution is not the best one, keeping in view the legal position or the earlier decisions or the likely repercussions, what in his/her opinion is the best course of action, with detailed justification.

6.9.2 Action by the Branch Officer : After scrutiny/consideration of the case from the above angles, the Branch Officer has to take the following action:

- (i) If the case is complete in all respects and the suggested course of action is also in order, then the Branch Officer should either approve the action and send down the file with his/her dated signatures thereon, provided he/she is empowered to dispose of that case at his/her level or endorse the proposed course of action by affixing his/her dated signatures and mark the file, to the next higher authorities whose approval/orders are to be obtained. In either case the Branch Officer has to sign the noting portion towards the right hand side of the page and mark the file downwards or upwards on the extreme left hand of the note, after cutting the marking to him/her and writing the designation of the lower or higher authority. The margin is, however, to be left blank.
- (ii) If the Branch Officer finds certain deficiencies or inconsistencies in the case or suggestions, he/she can either point out the same with directions to resubmit the case after removing the deficiencies/inconsistencies or discuss the matter with the Section in-Charge and ask him/her to resubmit the case after supplying the missing material or removing the deficiencies/inconsistencies. .
- (iii) If the Branch Officer holds the view that the course of action suggested is not proper and a different course of action suggested is more appropriate, then he/she may either discuss the proposed course of action with the Section in-Charge and ask him/her to write the proposed suggestion on the note if so agreed or alternatively dictate/write his/her note giving reasons for taking a different view. In the first alternative, the Branch Officer will cross the marking to him/her and write on the note sheet "*Discussed with... Please add the suggestions as discussed*" and mark the file to the Section in-Charge. In the second alternative, the Branch Officer will cross the marking to him/her and dictate or write his/her note, marking it down to the Section in-Charge in case he/she is authorised to decide the case, or to mark the file to the next higher authorities whose approval/ orders are to be obtained.
- (iv) Before submitting the case upwards the Branch Officer is also required to check the urgency labels or add the labels, if not found in the file. He/she has also to ensure that the arrangement of papers in the case is in the correct manner especially if additional papers have been referred to in his/her own note.
- (v) Secret/confidential cases are to be submitted/sent in a sealed cover.
- (vi) The Branch Officer while dealing secret/confidential or urgent cases himself/herself is required to follow the same procedure as is followed for dealing files/cases by the Sections. Without disclosing contents of the receipt, the Branch Officer should get the receipt diarised in the concerned Section by sending a slip containing the subject and other minimal details, and the papers should be dealt at his/her own level by asking for the concerned file from the Section.

6.9.3 Disposal by the Branch Officer : As far as possible, a Branch Officer will dispose of as many cases as possible on his/her own responsibility, if necessary, taking verbal advice. In cases, which are of sufficiently important nature like that of question of policy or where orders of Secretary-General or Chairman, Rajya Sabha are required as per rules, he/she will, of course, put up the cases to the Joint Director and higher officers.

Where he/she has to pass orders or to make recommendations for the consideration of higher officers, he/she will confine his/her note to the factual points that should be dealt with by him/her without attempting to reiterate the ground already covered in the previous notes. When he/she agrees with the recommendations made in the note, he/she will merely put his/her signature and indicate his/her agreement with a particular proposal.

When a note has been written and approved by an officer and sent to another officer or a Section for examination of the proposal or for comments, the officer to whom the file is marked should invariably write the note himself/herself or by an officer *at most* one level below, with his/her approval. The receiving officer may ask the Section to furnish the required information. In such cases, the Section should submit a separate routine note for the information of the Branch Officer, who shall accordingly record his/her note on the file. Courtesy demands that Sections should not write notes on files to dispose of issues pending at the officer level.

Subject to the rules and standing orders, a Joint Director/Director should ordinarily, dispose of the cases coming upto him on his/her own responsibility. However, he/she should use his/her discretion in taking orders of the Joint Secretary/ Additional Secretary/Secretary/Secretary-General on crucial cases, whether orally or by submission of papers.

6.10 Delegation and Issue of Standing Orders ñ Routine files and cases where the Rules and precedents make the course of action clear should be disposed of at the lowest possible level *i.e.* by the Deputy Director or Joint Director. Each Section should draft 'Standing Orders' setting out the class of cases which are of routine or, simple nature and can be disposed of at lower levels. The Director and Joint Secretary/Additional Secretary/Secretary after scrutinising the list and adding classes of cases disposable at their levels will obtain the orders of the Secretary-General on the delegation proposed at various levels.

Normally cases delegated shall be disposed of at the appropriate level unless the officer is of the opinion that it is necessary to obtain the orders of a higher authority for a particular reason or to bring it to his/her notice before initiating a particular course of action.

6.11 Notes based on oral orders ñ Where a note is initiated on the basis of a direction of a higher officer ordering a particular course of action, this shall be mentioned in the note and where the course of action is other than routine the file submitted either for orders or for information of that superior officer as soon as possible.

6.12 Preparation of self-contained notes in cases going up to Hon'ble Chairman ñ Whenever an order has to be obtained from the Chairman, Rajya Sabha on any matter, a self-contained note shall be submitted to him/her. The following instructions shall be observed in the preparation and submission of such self-contained notes:-

- (i) The note will start at the top of the page and be given a heading as follows:

RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT

(Section/Branch)

Subject _____

- (ii) The contents of the note should be *self-contained, concise and to the point* and will be divided into paragraphs, each dealing with a particular aspect of the subject and each paragraph duly numbered;
- (iii) The note shall contain a concise background of the case and the orders relevant to the subject matter and reference to the statutory or customary procedure or previous decisions or precedents, if any. If the case is based on the provisions of any rules, regulation, statute, or past precedent, action to be taken will also be suggested;
- (iv) If the inclusion of any information in the note is likely to obscure the main point at issue or makes the note unnecessarily lengthy, a separate statement or appendix giving the information will be placed on the file;

- (v) The last paragraph of the note should invariably state precisely the question or questions for consideration. or point on which the orders of the Chairman are required;
- (vi) The note should be neatly typed in 1.5 spacing with a quarter margin on green note-sheet and should not contain erasures, additions or interpolations;
- (vii) The self-contained note to the Chairman should be submitted through the Joint Secretary/Additional Secretary/Secretary and Secretary-General; and
- (viii) Sufficient blank space (at least 10 cm) will be left at the bottom part of the note sheet to obtain the orders on the same page. In case the note is ending at the bottom of the page, adjustment to margins, fonts or line spacing will be done to either create the space or carry the material over to the next page.

In the files in which the Orders of the Chairman are to be obtained, the last para of the note should clearly bring out the issue on which Hon'ble Chairman's Orders are needed. Thus, this para should be self-contained. For example, in a file relating to obtaining the Orders of Hon'ble Chairman for Field/Study Visit of a Department-related Standing Committee, the last para should read as follows:-

“Accordingly, approval of the Hon'ble Chairman is sought to the request of the Chairman of the Department-related Standing Committee on..... to visit Kolkata, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chennai, Mumbai, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu sometimes between 16th January, 2008 and 8th February, 2008 for on the spot study of may be obtained”.

6.13 General instructions on Noting — The following rules if systematically observed, will ensure that the noting process contributes constructively to decision making:—

- (i) All paragraphs in the note-sheet should be numbered consecutively for easy reference;
- (ii) In the margin, nothing except the identification of flags should be written. Two centimetres of space should be left on the top and at the bottom of the note-sheet. A note continued on to a new leaf/side should mention “*continued on page.... /overleaf*” on the previous leaf/side, and “*continued from page..... /overleaf*” on to the new leaf/side as the case may be, so that the continuity of the note is not lost;
- (iii) The notes should be properly referenced. The number and date of every communication referred to in the notes should be quoted in the notes with file no. and page no. The flags in the linked file(s) should be indicated in the margin, in pencil;
- (iv) Relevant lengthy extracts of a rule or instruction should be added on the file (in the correspondence portion, and page numbered) and attention to it drawn in the note rather than reproducing the provisions in the note, at length;
- (v) If a Paper Under Consideration (PUC) raises several points requiring detailed examination and separate respective orders, then each point or group of related points should be noted upon separately in the note of the dealing Assistant so that clear orders are passed on each point or group of points;
- (vi) All notes should be written in the third person;
- (vii) The language in the note should always be temperate, polite and courteous. It should be free from personal remarks, imputations, sarcasm or innuendoes. In case any contradiction, error or mis-statement is to be pointed out, care should be taken to couch the observations in a respectful manner;
- (viii) The use of abbreviations which are uncommon, should be avoided. In case such an abbreviation has to be used because it occurs several times in a note, the expanded form should be given the first time with the abbreviation in brackets;

- (ix) A simple or short word should be preferred to a long phrase or difficult word. For instance instead of writing the words “make the assessment” we can better use the word “assess” and instead of the words “make enquiries” use the word “enquire” and instead of the words “building purposes” use the words “for building” etc.;
- (x) Short sentences should be preferred to long ones;
- (xi) In all cases where it is anticipated that the file will reach the level of the Secretary-General, the note should always be self-contained avoiding as far as possible references to previous notes or correspondence. In case the previous notes or correspondence is to be referred to, then a summary of the matter should be given for taking a clear and quick decision. Where the file is likely to require the orders of the Chairman, procedure in para 6.12 and 6.13 must be followed;
- (xii) The concluding portion of the note should not end at the bottom of the note sheet. If the dealing Assistant apprehends such a situation, then he/she should take over the last few lines to the next page; and
- (xiii) Two extra blank note-sheets should be added to the noting portion after completing the note.

6.14 Drafting -- Drafting is the process of formulation of decisions and orders in written form for communication to those concerned. When a case comes back from the authorities with decision/order passed upon the notes, the next step generally is to convert the decision/orders into the form of an official communication. This is known as drafting. The importance of drafting lies in the fact that while noting is an internal process of an office (and thus not so open to outside scrutiny) the final draft which is issued is generally a document conveying to others, a decision, views or orders. As such, it must be clear and unambiguous. It must faithfully convey the letter and spirit of the decision taken through the noting process. And finally, the drafting must be in language not capable of misconstruction.

6.15 Stage of preparing a Draft — A Branch Officer, may prepare the draft himself/herself and authorise its issue or submit it to the higher officer for approval. Otherwise, the Section will prepare the draft. If the dealing Assistant thinks that the action proposed is very likely to be approved, he/she may add a draft along with his/her note, for speedy disposal. In routine cases like sanctioning of leave, cancellation of a tour programme, forwarding of a notice to a Ministry, sending a Report or Bill for printing etc. standard forms of communication are to be used, and in such cases fair drafts may be added straightaway.

In cases, where decision is not clearly known, a draft is to be added immediately after the case is received back with the decision. The draft in all such cases should conform strictly to the orders passed on the file. The dealing Assistant should ensure timely re-submission of the case in these circumstances.

The draft will be initiated by the dealing Assistant below the designation of the authority under whose signatures the draft is to issue. When a draft is approved, fair draft will be put up for signatures. The corrected copies will be retained and placed in the file for record.

The officer approving the draft has to put his/her initial with the date on the draft. It is not necessary to put initial on enclosures. The draft approved by the Officer is to be retained on a file along with an office copy of the fair communication.

6.16 Time allowed for Drafting — Generally, *two days* are given for preparing the draft and re-submitting the case file for approval of the draft. The time period is reckoned with reference to the receipt of the file in the Section and the receipt of the files with draft by the Officer competent to approve the draft. However in urgent and immediate cases *only one day* is allowed. If the work is time-bound, a draft is to be prepared *immediately* on receipt of a file.

If a communication being sent requires reply within a time-limit, it should be clearly specified in the draft, preferably by indicating the date rather than the period. The time allowed in this respect will mostly depend upon the nature of the communication and the nature of information sought.

6.17 Flagging, Referencing and Placement of Drafts— When the draft is completed, it is to be flagged at the top with “DFA” or “Draft for Approval” secured with a pin. If printed flags are not available, flags of normal size can be prepared and “DFA” written on it.

All communications/references referred to in the draft are to be referenced in the draft in ink indicating clearly the page number of the current file or the closed files. The page number of current file is to be indicated by the letter “C”. For example, if page 60 of the current file has to be referred in the draft, then the words “p60/C” are to be used. In the case of closed or other linked files, the page no. and file no. are both to be clearly stated.

The draft duly prepared, flagged and referenced is to be placed on the top of the correspondence portion and on the noting portion brief note saying “*DFA added/placed below*” is to be recorded and file submitted to the Section in-Charge for further submission of the case to the Branch Officer. After issue of the fair draft, the office copy together with the draft (and any earlier or corrected drafts) are to be placed inside the current file and serial number (consecutive number) and page number (consecutive number) should be given in ink on the office copy of the draft. Then on the note sheet, below the place where the draft was approved, cross-reference should be made by writing *Sl. No.* _____ *(I) Page Nos.* _____ */issued on* _____.

6.18 General instructions for drafting— The following should generally be kept in view:

- (i) In Simple and straightforward cases or those of repetitive nature, standard forms of communication should be got approved and used rather than attempting a draft in each case. These drafts can be kept in templates on the computer and fair copies prepared by entering data into the blank spaces provided. In all cases where standard forms are used, file may be submitted to the appropriate officer with fair copies of the communication for signature;
- (ii) A draft should carry the message sought to be conveyed in a language which should be clear, concise and incapable of misconstruction;
- (iii) A draft should contain short sentences in simple language. It should be broken up into paragraphs wherever required for easy reading, and the paragraphs should be numbered;
- (iv) Lengthy sentences, abruptness, redundancy, circumlocution, superlatives and repetition whether of words, or observations or ideas should be avoided;
- (v) Use of slovenly or colloquial words in the drafts is strictly forbidden. The language of the draft should be courteous, temperate, polite and free from personal remarks or insinuations;
- (vi) As far as possible, the ‘Subject’ should be mentioned in communications at the top in such a manner as to give the reader an immediate idea of the content of the letter;
- (vii) Communications of some length or complexity should generally conclude with a summary and/or one or two examples. Such communications should invariably be broken up into convenient paragraphs each dealing with one point of the issue;
- (viii) The number and date of the last communication in the series and if this is not from the addressee, his/her last communication on the subject should always be referred to. This is essential so that the addressee can locate his/her case file easily. Where it is necessary to refer to more than one communication, this should be done in the margin of the draft;

- (ix) In the reply letter in addition to giving the subject, the reference such as ‘*Ref: Your letter No. _____ dated _____*’ is also given at the top, just below the subject. This makes it easy for all concerned to locate the previous papers;
- (x) All drafts to be put up on a file should bear the file number which will ultimately be the number of the communication followed by Despatch number of the Section;
- (xi) The draft should clearly indicate the enclosures, which are to accompany the fair copy. Short oblique lines should be drawn in the margin at appropriate places of the draft where the enclosures are referred to be sent with the communication. This serves as a guide to the typist and the comparer who will also mark short oblique on the fair copy so that the despatcher does not omit to send the enclosures. The number of enclosures is also to be indicated at the end of the draft on the bottom left of the page as for example “*Encl.- 4;*”
- (xii) If copies of the enclosures referred to in the draft are available and are, therefore, not to be typed, an indication to that effect should be given in the margin of the draft below the relevant oblique line;
- (xiii) The nature of urgency such as ‘Urgent’, ‘Immediate’, ‘Most Immediate’ etc. is to be indicated in the draft at the top right, in bold letters. If the letter is to be delivered by special messenger, this should be indicated. In case, it is to be delivered the same day, this should be clearly specified on the letter/its cover along with other dispatch instructions, if any;
- (xiv) If the communication to be sent by post is important then instructions as to whether it should be sent through speed post, registered post, in an insured cover or under a certificate of posting should be given on the draft in bold, on the top right below the urgency marking, if any;
- (xv) The name, designation and telephone/fax number and E-mail address of the officer, over whose signature the communication is to issue, should invariably be indicated in the draft. In case of extremely important communications, where immediate reply is required or a telephonic discussion is expected, residence phone number should also be given;
- (xvi) While writing or typing a draft, sufficient space should be left in the margin and between successive lines to facilitate corrections/additions or interpolation of words, if any, by higher authorities;
- (xvii) The draft should be as brief as is consistent with clearness and completeness. As a rule, the notes will show the outline of the reply and to what extent it is intended that a detailed discussion of reasons or of the history of the case should be embodied in the draft. Where such details are given, the draft should adhere as far as possible, to the actual wording of the note, but while preparing the draft, extracts as such of the notes leading to a decision are not to be reproduced in the draft. The practice of forwarding a copy of the relevant portion of the note-sheet with a covering letter as a substitute for drafting a communication is totally forbidden as it indicates lack of application of mind; and
- (xviii) The draft is to be approved by the authority competent and authorised to issue the draft under his/her signature and in token of his/her approval the concerned officer has to append his/her dated initial on the draft.

6.19 Use of different forms of Communications – Different forms of communications are to be used for correspondence with different offices/organizations, etc. as detailed below:

(1) **Letter:** This form is used for correspondence with Foreign Governments, Government of India, State Governments, Public Service Commissions, Directorates, Collectorates, Public Enterprises, Statutory Authorities, Public Bodies and members of the public generally. A letter begins with the salutation “Sir”, “Sirs” or “Dear Sir(s)” as may be appropriate and ends with “Yours faithfully”. If the letter contains any decision/directions in continuation

of or in supersession of earlier similar communication(s), it is essential to write in the margin below the main letter the reference of all such communications by writing —

“In this context also read/refer to the earlier communications as under:

- (i) Reference No. _____ Dated _____
- (ii) Reference No. _____ Dated _____ etc.”

(2) **Office Memorandum :** This form is generally used for correspondence with other Divisions of the Secretariat or in calling for information from or conveying information to employees. This is also used in communicating instructions/decisions in certain cases. It is written in the third person and bears no salutation except the name and designation of the officer signing it.

If the Office Memorandum conveys any decision in continuation of or in supersession of an earlier similar communication, then it is essential to mention in the margin below the main Office Memorandum the reference of all such communications by writing:

“In this context also read/refer to the earlier communications as under:

- (i) Reference No. _____ Dated _____
- (ii) Reference No. _____ Dated _____ etc.”

(3) **Demi-Official Letter:**

- (a) This form is generally used in correspondence between Officers to supplement or explain matter which has been referred officially or is proposed to be referred officially. Demi-official correspondence may also be used not merely to supplement, but in place of official correspondence, in cases of extreme secrecy, where it is considered necessary to run no risk and in certain classes of personal questions, and occasionally in cases of urgency or importance for inviting the personal attention of the Officer concerned.
- (b) It is to be written in the first person in a personal and friendly tone and it should be addressed by an Officer who is ordinarily not more than one or two levels below the Officer to whom such communication is addressed. Such letters should not be more than a page or two in 1.5 space. If detailed facts and figures are required to be communicated, it should be sent as an annexure to the D. O. letter.
- (c) When instructions, which should be on record have been given in the first instance demi-officially, they should be supplemented by an official letter. Similarly, when a demi-official letter has been used instead of an official letter because of urgency, a supplementary official communication should be sent if the information is ought to be an official record. This procedure must invariably be complied with.
- (d) Demi-official correspondence should not be quoted in official communications or be noticed officially in any way.
- (e) No demi-official letter or demi-official telegram to, or from the Secretariat should be quoted in any official paper or publication without previous reference to the Secretariat. It should be understood that such demi-official communications, unless they have been brought on, record, cannot be considered as being official orders of the Secretariat.
- (f) Demi-official letters should be drafted by Branch Officers and above only and drafts should not be put up by the Section.

(4) **Inter-departmental note:** This form is generally used for obtaining advice, views, concurrence or comments of other Divisions/Sections or Departments/Ministries of Government on a proposal or in seeking clarification of the existing rules, instructions, etc. This form can be used in either of the following ways:

- (a) by sending the file itself with a note recorded thereon; or
- (b) by sending a self-contained note or memorandum.

(5) **Memorandum :** This is used for conveying information, calling for explanation, etc. not amounting to an order to subordinate authorities. This system is particularly applicable to urgent cases. Where the information conveyed is in continuation/supersession of earlier information, such previous memoranda may be referred to in the margin under the heading. "In this context also read the earlier communications as under:

- (i) Ref. No. _____ Dated _____
- (ii) Ref. No. _____ Dated _____ etc."

This will ensure that these earlier communications are also read, if required by those concerned.

(6) **Office order :** This form is normally used for issuing instructions meant for internal administration e.g. grant of regular leave, distribution of work among officers and sections, holidays and other orders of general nature.

(7) **Order :** This form is generally used for issuing certain types of financial sanctions and for communicating Orders in disciplinary cases, etc., to the officials concerned.

(8) **Notification :** This form is mostly used in notifying the promulgation of statutory Rules and Orders, election of Members, vacation of seats, appointments and promotions of Gazetted Officers, etc., through publication in the official Gazette of India. A legible and signed copy of the Notification should be sent to the Director/ Jt. Director, Printing for Publication. Where the Notification is in continuation/supersession of an earlier communication on the subject, especially Statutory Rules and Orders, reference should be made to all earlier relevant Rules/Orders giving their number and date in the margin. This will ensure that these earlier communications are also referred to by those concerned. The notification to be published in a Gazette Extraordinary should invariably be signed in ink by an officer not lower in rank than a Joint Secretary. The name, designation and telephone No. of the Officer, signing the notification should invariably be mentioned to enable the Press to contact the Officer concerned in case of any doubt. This reference can be in the margin under the title, "In this context also read the earlier Notification(s) as under:

- (i) Ref. No. _____ Dated _____
- (ii) Ref. No. _____ Dated _____ etc."

(9) **Endorsement :**

- (a) This form is made use of when a paper is returned in original to the sender or is referred to another department or subordinate office for information, remarks or disposal, or where a copy of a communication is to be forwarded to others in addition to the original addressee.
- (b) Copies of financial sanctions where required to be communicated to the audit authorities are also sent by means of an endorsement.
- (c) This form should not, however, be used in communicating copies to Governments, which should generally be done in the form of a letter.

(10) **Telegram :** This form is used for communicating with out-station offices/parties in matters of urgency demanding prompt attention. As fast airmail, speedpost, telex and E-mail services exist, no telegram should be sent when a letter with appropriate urgency marking can serve the purpose. Where only a telegram can serve the purpose, the text of the telegram should be as brief as possible. While drafting telegrams, unnecessary use of articles and punctuation marks like "(?)" and "(.)" should be avoided. If marks like "stop" are to be used the words "stop" be used instead of "(.)".

Grading of urgency in telegrams should also be used carefully. Only in cases of exceptional urgency should, “Immediate” and “Most Immediate” telegrams be sent. In all cases, post-copy of the telegram duly signed by the sender should be sent by post.

(11) **Express letters/savingram:** This form is used in communicating with out-station offices and parties in matters warranting urgent attention at the receiving end but not justifying the expense of a telegram. It is worded exactly like a telegram but transmitted through a post office instead of a telegraph office.

(12) **Fax message:** This mode of communication is used when a copy of the signed communication is required to be sent so urgently that it cannot await postal service. This facility is available only for addresses who have fax facilities and it enables transmission of the letter/communication like a photocopy at the other end. It is particularly useful in conveying drawings, diagrams, etc. or where an individual’s writing or signatures needs to be transmitted. It is also now increasingly being used in order to reduce the typing work involved in telex/E-mail but this should not be encouraged when Telex or E-mail is possible as fax to out-station locations uses STD lines and is a comparatively expensive mode of communication.

(13) **E-mail:** E-mail facility uses computers and the users are linked through satellite. Transmission is instantaneous and NIC’s E-mail facility is free of cost. E-mail of routine communication should be encouraged as a replacement for written communication. E-mail on important matters received from outside should, however, be confirmed unless it contains authenticated digital signatures.

(14) **Telephonic Communication:**

- (a) Appropriate use of telephone facilities may be made by departments for intra and inter-departmental consultation and for communication of information between offices and parties situated locally.
- (b) In matters of urgency, one may communicate with out-station Offices/Organisation also over the telephone.
- (c) Telephonic communications, wherever necessary, may be followed by written communications by way of confirmation.
- (d) Resort to STD and trunk calls should be restricted and has to be regulated by the instructions issued from time to time.

(15) **Press communique/Note:** This form is used when it is proposed to give wide publicity to a decision or an event. A press communique is more formal in character than a Press note and is expected to be reproduced intact by the Press. A Press Note, on the other hand, is intended to serve as a handout to the Press, which may edit, compress or enlarge it, as deemed fit.

(16) **Circular:** This form is used when important and urgent external communications received or important and urgent decisions taken internally have to be circulated within the Secretariat for information and compliance by employees.

(17) **Advertisement:** This form is used for communicating with public in General.

(18) **Notice:** This form is used for communicating to Members regarding meetings of the Committees.

(19) **Summons:** This form is used by Secretary-General for informing Members about the summoning of the House by the President under Article 85(1) of the Constitution.

6.20 Addressing of Communication to appropriate levels – The following instructions are relevant while addressing letters to various authorities:

(i) *Correspondence with Government of India:*

- (a) official correspondence with Ministries of Government of India is to be by official letter, over the signature of the Deputy Director/Joint Director/Director;

- (b) in routine matters, generally where some factual information is to be conveyed or asked for, communication may be undertaken through Office Memoranda over the signatures of the Deputy Director;
 - (c) demi-official correspondence, if required, will be at the level of atleast the Joint Secretary of the Secretariat; and
 - (d) no direct correspondence will normally be done with attached and subordinate offices or public undertakings, and all correspondence will be with the Administrative Ministry (as per allocation of Business Rules). In emergent cases, a copy may be endorsed to the office directly but replies will be entertained only from the Administrative Ministry.
- (ii) *Reference to the Attorney General of India* : References to the Attorney General will be made only with the approval of Secretary-General and under his/her signatures.
 - (iii) *Reference to the Comptroller and Auditor General of India*: References to the Comptroller and Auditor General for his/her views or advice are made only by or through the Ministry of Finance.
 - (iv) *References to the Union Public Service Commission*: References to the Union Public Service Commission will normally be made in the form of letters addressed to the Secretary.
 - (v) *Correspondence with Union Territory Administrations*: All communications of a routine nature, which are clearly relatable to the business of a particular department, will ordinarily be addressed to the Secretary in the appropriate department. Other communications may be addressed to the Chief Secretary or the Administrator depending upon the importance of the matter.
 - (vi) *Correspondence with State Government*:
 - (a) Communications on the subjects clearly relatable to the business of a particular department will normally be addressed to the Secretary of that department. Other communications including those of Special nature or importance warranting attention at higher levels may be addressed to the Chief Secretary. Demi-official letters can also be sent to officers of State Governments. Since a demi-official letter is written in the first person in a personal and friendly tone, it should be addressed by an Officer who is not more than one or two levels below the Officer to whom such a communication is addressed. In case of a demi-official communications to the Chief Secretary of a State, this level will not be below the level of Joint Secretary.
 - (b) Correspondence with bodies under the control of or responsible to State Governments will not normally be done directly, but will be routed through the Administrative Department of the State Government.
 - (c) Communications other than those of a purely routine nature, *e.g.* acknowledgements, will not ordinarily be addressed to State Governments except with the prior approval and over the signature of the Branch Officer. Purely routine communications can, however, be signed by a Section in-charge.
 - (vii) *Correspondence with Foreign Governments and International Organisations*: Correspondence with Foreign Governments and their missions in India, Heads of Indian diplomatic missions and posts abroad and United Nations and its specialised agencies will normally be channelised through the Ministry of External Affairs. The cases in which and the conditions subject to which direct correspondence may be resorted to are indicated in the instructions entitled '*Channel of communication between the Government of India and State Governments or their Missions in India, Heads of Indian Diplomatic Missions and posts abroad and United Nations and its specialised agencies on the other*' issued by the Ministry of External Affairs, and may be consulted.

6.21 Issue and Despatch – The term ‘Issue’ is used to signify the different stages of action after approval of a draft ending with despatch of a signed communication to the addressee namely, typing of a fair copy, the examination of the typed material, attaching enclosures, submission of the fair copy for signatures and the despatch of the communication to the addressee. The procedure given in this para relates only to the issue of files and papers other than those bearing security markings.

To expedite issue of urgent dak, the officer may issue it directly from his/her personal office through a Peon Book. It is important, however, that whenever such direct issue by the officer is made, a proper record is maintained so that the movement of the dak can be traced out easily. The record of such issue should be maintained in a Peon Book, and a copy of the receipt sent back along with the office copy to the section for placing in the file.

Where a letter is sent to Distribution Section for despatch, fair letter along with office copy (with special instructions on delivery, if any) will be sent after marking entry in the register above. Distribution Section will make entries in their register (*see* Chapter-VII) and return the office copy after recording Despatch no(s) and date thereon. This will be entered in the last column before papers are sent to the Assistant to place into the file. The Section Diarist/Clerk will each day peruse the register to check whether any papers sent to Despatch Section are outstanding and in case of delay he/she, will bring this to the notice of the officer-in-charge of the section.

In sending letter to Distribution Section care should be taken to indicate priority:—

- (i) ‘To be delivered today’ or ‘by special messenger’ indicates that the delivery must be completed the same day whether at office or residence,
- (ii) ‘Immediate’ or ‘Urgent’ papers are sent the same day if received in Distribution Section during office hours, and on first priority the next morning if received thereafter.

As far as possible, papers should be sent so as to reach Distribution Section during office hours so that adequate arrangements are made. In case same day delivery or special messenger delivery papers are likely to take time, advance intimation should be sent to Distribution Section by 4.30 p.m. so that they can make arrangements.

The Section should telephonically ascertain completion of delivery of ‘same day’ papers before leaving for the day. In case of immediate/urgent cases, delivery should be ascertained by the next morning. In both cases care should be taken to receive back the office copy with despatch numbers and proof of delivery latest by the next day and it will be the personal responsibility of issuing Section to ensure that the delivery has been made as per instructions.

In respect of secret letters, the letters will be sent to Distribution Section in sealed envelopes bearing the file no. Office copies will not be sent, instead a plain receipt will be obtained giving the despatch no. and date which will be placed on the section file after entering the details in the section despatch register. In all such cases, proof of delivery will be asked for from Distribution Section and placed on the file.

6.22 Action after Issue – After the fair copies are made over to the Diarist for despatch, the dealing hand will replace the draft on the file in the appropriate place i.e., end of the correspondence part of the file and assign it serial number and page numbers. The dealing Assistant will record the following entry in the noting portion:—

"Sl. No. _____ (I) page(s) _____ Issued on _____"

The dealing Assistant will thereafter take the following action as appropriate:—

- (a) cases which should be seen by higher officers for information or for confirmation of the action taken will be sent to them.
- (b) cases on which further action is necessary in continuation of the action taken (for example, on side issues etc.) will be resubmitted to the officer concerned.

- (c) cases in which replies are expected to the communications/issues or in which action is to be taken after a certain period will be arranged in the racks or almirahs at one place marked "Suspense". Entry will also be made in the reminder register (*see* para 6.23 below).
- (d) the copy with despatch no. received from Distribution Section and receipts for acknowledgement due will be filed in properly.
- (e) when a communication is required to be printed in the gazette or in a newspaper, track will be kept to ensure that a printed copy is received, the printed copy indicating the date and number of issue in which it has been printed will be placed on the file with proper referencing on the office copy of the communication.

6.23 Reminders — In order to ensure that information or decision requested in correspondence is not delayed at the other end, it may become necessary to issue reminders. Reasonable time, based on the nature of the case has to be given before issuing a reminder, but, cases should not be neglected or unduly prolonged by failing to issue a reminder.

To keep track of such cases, every Assistant must maintain a reminder diary in the following format:

Reminder Due for _____ (Date)

Sl. No.	File No.	Brief Subject	Addressed to	Date of issue of letter/previous reminder

As soon as an important letter is issued, the Assistant should enter the details in the page reserved for reminders of that particular day. Each day he/she should inspect his/her diary in order to be able to locate cases where a reminder is to be issued on that day, and put up a draft reminder for approval. On issue of the reminder, he/she will again make an entry for the next appropriate date for issue of the subsequent reminder.

6.24 Secret and Confidential Documents — Public Officials are prohibited under the Conduct Rules from communicating any information to which access is obtained by them in the course of their official duties to any-one without the requisite authority. This applies equally to indiscreet conversation, correspondence or communication within or outside the office, in connection with official secrets. It cannot be over-emphasised that any infringement must be dealt with severely.

The following instructions should be particularly observed:

- (i) *Handling of Secret Matters*— Secret and confidential papers (whether originating within the Secretariat or emanating from the Government) should pass through as few hands as possible in the office. They should be dealt with only by selected and responsible officials and special arrangements should be made for their typing and despatch and safe custody after disposal.
- (ii) *Access*— The personnel who deal with "Secret" or "Confidential" papers should be thoroughly reliable from security point of view and their workplace should, as far as possible, be segregated from the rest of the office. Other officials should not have access to the secret and confidential files and papers.
- (iii) *Dealing*— In all Sections, the Section-in-charge should himself/herself deal with confidential cases. They should not be sent to Clerks for putting up papers. Senior Assistants in case the situation requires, may be asked to deal with such papers.
- (iv) *Confidential Register*— For the purpose of registering and making separate files of confidential correspondence, a separate register will be maintained in each section where such cases arise. The

- pages of the register should be numbered and a full or half page should be allotted to each case according to whether it is likely to consist of few or several papers. The register should be prefaced with a rough abstract or index of its contents, and this should invariably be posted up immediately a fresh case is entered. The register may run on from year to year until it is filled up, a proper break being observed at the end of each year.
- (v) *Orders to be taken before registering confidential papers in doubtful cases*—When a Section in-charge thinks that a paper marked “Confidential” is not of a sufficiently confidential character to merit special treatment, he/she should ask for orders of the Branch Officer before bringing it on the confidential register. If it is decided to register the papers in the office diary, the official who is to deal with it should himself/herself make the entry in the diary, noting the subject merely by the word “Confidential”. For purpose of diary marking, a slip should be sent to the Diarist to mark off the ‘file number on which dealt with’ and ‘designation of the officer addressed.’ With a view to preventing a large accumulation of confidential papers in the several sections of the office, orders should be taken at the end of each year as to whether some of the papers may not be placed with the recorded cases to which they relate.
 - (vi) *Paging of papers placed in sealed covers by Officers*—If a case is so confidential that an Officer sends it in a sealed cover not to be opened in the office, that officer should himself/herself see to the arrangement and numbering of the pages of the papers. He/she should also note the last diary number on the cover.
 - (vii) *Typing of confidential letters*—When a confidential or secret letter is to be issued, it is incumbent on the Section in-charge or the Assistant concerned, unless directed by an officer to copy it himself/herself, to have it typed and despatched under his/her personal supervision. The Section-in-charge or the Assistant should in every case examine the work himself/herself. Only the work to be typed (i.e. without the main file) should be given to the Steno/Typist and if it is not finished by the time of office closes, it should be taken back and locked up for the night. The Steno/Typist should be cautioned against talking about the work in hand and his/her name should invariably be noted on the manuscript or on the typed copy of the draft if the manuscript is to be destroyed.
 - (viii) *Despatching of Confidential and Secret Correspondence*—When a despatch number is asked for from the Distribution Section, the only information to be given to that section is the word “Confidential”.
 - (ix) *Duplicating of “Top Secret” and “Secret” papers*—The number of copies made should be carefully recorded and each copy serially numbered and identified by number in the distribution or despatch list. Spare copies should be strictly limited and held in the custody of the official in-charge of the section dealing with the case. All drafts and rough notes and other routine papers of secret nature must invariably be destroyed as soon as the fair copies of the letter, note, etc. have been prepared. Extra, pages or spoilt pages produced during printing or photo copying should likewise be destroyed immediately.
 - (x) *Used Stencils of Secret and Confidential letters*—Used stencils of secret and confidential letters whose retention for further use is considered necessary, must be kept separate from the file, and in the personal custody of the section in-charge of the section concerned. He/she will be responsible for checking and weeding out his/her stock of used stencils regularly and at frequent intervals. All used stencils marked for weeding out should be destroyed by burning.
 - (xi) *Short-hand note book*—Short-hand notebooks should be numbered and dated before issue. Stenographers should keep them under lock and key. The books should be burnt after six months in the presence of an officer. The Storekeeper should maintain a register showing the receipt and issue of notebooks from time to time.
 - (xii) *Disposal of Waste Papers*—Great care should be taken both in officers' and section rooms in disposing of waste papers of all kinds. ‘Top Secret’ papers must be destroyed by shredding.

- (xiii) *Custody of Confidential Registers and Confidential Files:* The Confidential Register and all secret and confidential papers should be kept under lock and key. For this purpose, each Section in-charge should keep an almirah or box, as circumstances may require. The key (a duplicate to be with the Branch Officer in case papers are required in the absence of the Section in-charge) should be kept in the personal custody of the Section in-charge who should allow no one but himself/herself to have access of the confidential almirah or box in his/her charge. Section in-charges will ordinarily keep in their almirahs the disposed off confidential cases for three years. Confidential cases of older date will be made over to the General Records to be kept confidentially with the same precautions.
- (xiv) *Removal of files from the Office—* Secret papers must not, in any circumstances, be removed by any official.
- (xv) *Special Labels:—*A “Confidential”, “Secret” or “Top Secret” slip depending on the nature of secrecy of the case, should be fixed on every case as also its cover.
- (xvi) *Custody of Secret Electronic Documents—* Secret documents word processed on computers should not be left on the computer unless its safety and security can be ensured against unauthorized access. Such documents should be kept on removable storage media only, under lock and key.

6.25 Movement of confidential and secret cases— In their passage from the officers and *vice versa*, confidential and secret papers should either be passed direct from hand to hand, or be submitted and returned under sealed cover. It should be ensured that:

- (i) When a case is sent in a closed cover, the date on which it is sent and the diary number of the case should be inserted on the cover or on the economy label.
- (ii) The officer who sends out the file or papers in a sealed cover should write his/her initials or signatures on the economy slip in such a way that part of the signatures or initials is on the portion of the slip attached to the flap of the envelope and the rest on the remaining portion of the slip. This will enable detection of efforts to open or tamper with the cover.
- (iii) Where confidential papers have to be sent to officers at their residences, they should invariably be sent in a sealed cover. The messenger/attendant taking the cover to the officers’ residence should be instructed to obtain the signature of the officer to whom the papers are addressed if he/she is present, and if not, he/she may obtain the signature of any person of the household in token of having received them.
- (iv) Confidential documents requiring to be sent by mail should only be sent in encrypted form.

When it is required to consult another outside department, in connection with a confidential case, only the papers that are absolutely necessary for the purpose of the reference should be sent with the file and a list of the papers so sent should be kept on the retained portion.

Covers received, which are marked with the word ‘Secret’ or ‘Confidential’ should be sent unopened to the officer to whom they are addressed. Covers marked with the word ‘Secret’ or ‘Confidential’ only, and without the name or designation of any officer on either the inner or outer cover, should be submitted unopened to the Head of the Office. Papers received from the Government of India or State Governments and marked ‘Top Secret’ will be dealt with by Joint Secretary or Joint Director or Deputy Director concerned and will remain in his/her custody after disposal; on no account must such papers be allowed to be seen by an official lower in status than that of a Section in-charge.