



सत्यमेव जयते

অসম চৰকাৰ

Govt of Assam

HANDBOOK ON

Office Procedure, Noting and Drafting



Assam Administrative Staff College

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ARTPPG Department, GoA

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মুখ্যমন্ত্রী, অসম
Chief Minister, Assam



FOREWORD

The work environment across the globe is undergoing rapid changes, and the utilization of human resources is evolving accordingly, with Assam being no exception. To keep pace with these changes, it is imperative that the Assam government focuses on empowering its human resources with a global outlook while remaining grounded in Indian values.

To achieve this vision, our government is implementing effective changes in work culture and striving to instill new ideas and a broader perspective in the minds of the officials. In line with this effort, the ARTPPG Department of the Government of Assam is introducing a set of training manuals and handbooks. Our Government is ensuring the smooth functioning of the daily administration with the help of these Training Manuals/ Handbooks for the Grade-3 officials. To effectively cater to the requirements of Grade-3 officials, experts have meticulously drafted the training manuals and handbooks, aiming to cover a wide range of relevant topics. Moreover, focused attempts have been made to embed the books with relevant case studies, examples and FAQs on different topics to enable the users to adapt to the procedural yet divergent needs of today's dynamic administration.

True to the objective of our Government in creating a spirited workforce, introduction of multifaceted learning and training programme have been thought of to enable our officials realize their true potential. This would help them to reorient themselves to the day-to-day administrative developments while performing their duties with honesty and transparency.

I believe the Training Manuals / Handbooks will hold immense value as a guiding light on diverse professional trajectories. They will also serve as a roadmap to steer capacity building of the Grade-III officials in a systematic and coherent manner.

(Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma)

Dr. Ravi Kota, IAS
Chief Secretary
Government of Assam



ড° ৰবি কোটা, ভাঃ প্ৰঃ সেঃ
মুখ্য সচিব
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Preparation of a Training policy of a State and aligning it with the needs of the variegated workforce which has to constantly prove its relevance in this era of transition towards technology forms the very backbone of the administration in the form of a challenging task. In this due course of action, capacity building of Grade-III officials not only requires them to remain efficient in their daily official duties but also must be able to motivate them to work, learn and evolve in a comprehensive manner.

The present District training manuals for Grade-III officials have been prepared under the aegis of the Administrative Reforms Training Pension and Public Grievances Department (ARTPPG) and the Assam Administrative Staff College (AASC), who were aided by renowned experts and stakeholders from all the concerned fields. The manuals are a product of much detailed and multiple deliberations on the requisite subjects and it also includes valuable inputs from The Institute of Secretariat Training and Management (ISTM), Delhi in certain applicable topics. The Training Needs Assessment (TNA) was diligently conducted by AASC to chalk out an inclusive need based approach suited for a bottom up perspective for the Grade-III officials and also to ensure that no vital subject has been overlooked.

I believe that the Training manuals will help the Trainers and the trainees as well in a holistic manner and I earnestly request all concerned to send us feedback which would be of great help when we take up further revisionary exercises.

(Dr. Ravi Kota)
Chief Secretary, Assam

Shantanu Gotmare, IAS
Commissioner & Secretary
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MESSAGE

The Department of Administrative Reforms, Training, Pension and Public Grievances (ARTPPG) plays a vital role in the formulation of the State Training Policy and training it's civil servants to build capacity for improving 'Ease of Living' for people of Assam.

The content of the district training manuals aims to bolster capacity of the Grade-3 employees in an elaborate and lucid manner. We have worked meticulously to prepare content of the manuals by collaborating with experts and have actively collated through appropriate stakeholders, which objectively present a comprehensive picture for the officials, covering a broad spectrum of their daily official duties.

I express my sincere thanks to the Committee for vetting the full content. ARTPPG acknowledges the contributions of Committee Members in the preparation of the training manuals. Special mention must be made to the Assam Administrative Staff College, Khanapara and my team in ARTPPG Department for relentless work to get the training manuals.

I sincerely hope that that these manuals will be extremely useful to the trainers, trainees and as well as the officials.

(Shantanu Gotmare)



Foreword

The District Training Manuals for Grade-III officials of the Government of Assam have been designed by the Assam Administrative Staff College (AASC) with the help of renowned guest faculty and experts under the able guidance of the Administrative Reforms, Training, Pension and Public Grievances (ARTPPG) Department and inputs from the Institute of Secretariat Training and Management (ISTM), New Delhi.

I hope these manuals will be used extensively by the trainers and trainees and will help the officials become more knowledgeable, competent and productive at their work places.

I would like to convey my gratitude to all the renowned guest faculty and to all the individuals associated with the successful publication of the manuals for their inputs and support throughout the process of designing and printing these manuals.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Riju Gogoi', written in a cursive style.

Riju Gogoi
Director of Training
Assam Administrative Staff College

Office Procedure, Noting and Drafting

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Office Procedure, Noting and Drafting

1. Introduction

An office is a collection of people engaged in allotted work to fulfil the purpose of the organization. The main work in an office consists of dealing with correspondence. The people engaged in the offices are given certain tasks, which they have to complete within a given period so as to achieve the objective of the organization. The persons employed in an office work in teams or in a hierarchy.

The office procedure may be said to be a set of rules or policies guiding the operation of an office. **It is sequences in which certain operations are carried out in respect of what is done, who does it, when and where it is done in the organization.**

2. Dak and Who Can Open It

Dak includes every type of written communication such as letter, interdepartmental note, file, fax, e-mail, wireless message which is received, whether by post or otherwise, in any department for its consideration. **All incoming and outgoing paper communications of an office are called Dak.**

The Daks shall be opened in the following manner:

- I. The Dak under the cover having address of an officer by name and is received in the Department/Office will be sent to him unopened at once.
- II. The Dak under the cover which are not addressed to an officer by name will be opened by the Section Officer/Superintendent. In case of such covers with security marking, the Section Officer/Superintendent will do the needful as per security instructions.
- III. All other covers will be opened by the Diarist. While opening the Dak, the Diarist will check the enclosures, and in case of any found missing, make a note of the fact on body of the receipt. After receiving the Dak, he will send them to the Branch Officer.

3. Perusal of Dak by Superintendent

The Superintendent will go through the Dak immediately on receipt from the Branch Officer and will -

- a. sort out important and priority receipts, telegrams and reminders. He will determine priority for action on receipts and mark the priority in ink on the receipt itself.
- b. call for the Dealing Hand and give them directions regarding disposal of the receipt. In case of a reminder, he will put up the file immediately to the Branch Officer explaining why timely action was not taken.
- c. mark all receipts other than those at (d) to the Dealing Hand according

to the subjects allotted to each. He will take action on important receipts himself.

- d. sort out receipts, if any, which are missent to the Department/Office or the subject matter of which does not pertain to it and arrange for their transfer to the Office/Branch concerned, where necessary, with the orders of the Branch Officer.
- e. hand over the Dak to the Diarist for diarizing.

4. Registration of Dak

Dak should be registered at entry level so as to maintain accountability of every paper received by the respective Office. The Diarist or any other Assistant entrusted, will then enter the Dak in the Receipt Register in prescribed form. He will at this stage complete required column of the receipt Register and enter the diary number of the receipt in the space provided for the purpose in the stamp put on the receipt.

After diarizing, the Diarist will distribute the receipts to the Assistants concerned recording the Diary No of the receipt on the Personal Log Book.

5. Collection of Relevant Materials

The office will then collect the material required for taking action on a receipt. This will ordinarily consist of-

- I. the file on the subject if one already exists;
- I. other files or papers, if any, referred to in the receipt; and
- II. any other material which is required to draw attention, where necessary, to the statutory or customary procedure and to point out the law and rules and where they are to be found. For this purpose, the Dealing Hand will consult the File Register, Precedent Register, Standing Guard File, if any, and relevant Act, Rules, Regulation, etc. He/She will take the advice of the Section Officer/Superintendent in difficult or doubtful cases.

6. Bearing a Receipt on a File

A receipt will be brought on to a current file if it relates to a subject on which a file already exists. If not, it will be necessary to open a new file for initiating action on the receipt if further correspondence is anticipated. The miscellaneous papers may be filed suitably in a miscellaneous file. Before placing a receipt on a file, all unnecessary pins and clips will be removed. The receipt will then be docketed and referenced.

7. Logbook for Dealing Hand

Every Dealing Hand will maintain a logbook indicating his day to day disposal of receipts and files in the prescribed format. After making entries in the Receipt Register, the Receipt or Diarist will distribute the receipts to the Assistants concerned recording the Receipt number on the Log Book.

8. Priority Marking and Timetable on Disposal of Dak

The higher officer of the Branch or the Head of the Office can give priority marking on the receipt considering urgency of its disposal. The higher officers on their part should give such marking carefully. They should besides taking the nature of receipt into consideration, also keep in view the total priority work sent down to the office

The following kinds of priority marking only will be used:

- I. Immediate:** Immediate cases should be taken up immediately on receipt by stopping all other works and should be put on the day of receipt or on the next working day.
- II. Urgent:** Urgent cases should be put within 3 days.
- III. Fixed Date:** Fixed Date cases should be given precedence over other cases of ordinary nature and flag should be attached indicating the date on which action should be taken.

The cases bearing no priority marking should be put not later than 7 days.

The Superintendent will ensure that the priority labels are removed or changed when no longer required or the priority is changed. The Branch Officer will check this.

9. Action on the Cases Not Ready Within Prescribed Time

A case which is not ready within the prescribed time limit will be shown to the Branch Officer or a higher officer for extension of time limit. The officer concerned shall indicate the further time allowed for submission of the case.

10. Page Number in the File

There will be one page number in the correspondence part of the file also for the notes portion. Every page in each part of the file will be consecutively numbered in separate series. Blank intervening pages, if any, will not be numbered. The receipts or notes written or typed on both sides should be numbered on both the sides. The numbering will be done in the ink at the top right hand corner of the pages.

The page number once allotted to either part of the file will not ordinarily be changed. If however, it becomes necessary to do so as per the orders of an officer not below the rank of the Branch Officer which will be taken in the notes portion of the file.

11. Docketing

Docketing is the process of making entries in the "Notes" portion of a file about each receipt or issue number and date of the letter and from whom received or to whom issued. A receipt or issue will be docketed between two lines by writing across the page. The receipt will be entered in red and issue in blue-black ink. The page number of the communication will be shown just outside the margin.

12. Filing and Punching of Papers

Filing of papers means placing the PUC in the correspondence portion and the notes in the notes portion of a file. The paper required to be filed will be punched on the **left-hand top corner leaving one inch each on the top and left corner** and tagged onto the appropriate part of the file. Both the 'notes portion and 'correspondence portion' are to be separately page numbered. The first page of the correspondence shall be on the top and while the last page shall be at the bottom of correspondence portion.

13. Note by Dealing Hand

Notes are written remarks recorded on a paper under consideration to facilitate its disposal. It consists of previous paper, statement or analysis of the question or questions requiring decisions, suggestion regarding course of action and final order passed thereon. The notes written by the Dealing Hand on the papers under consideration (PUC) to facilitate its disposal are called office notes.

14. General Instructions Regarding Noting

- I. **Language:** The language of the note should be made in the third person. No note should be recorded addressing the officer to whom the file is put up in second person.
- II. **Remarks of Officer on Receipt:** If the Branch Officer or higher officer has made any remarks on a receipt, these should first be copied out in the note sheet before writing a note. If it is not copied, it should be mentioned that there is instruction on the body of the PUC. No note should be written on the receipt except in a routine matter.
- III. **Concise and to the point:** A note must be concise and to the point. Lengthy notes are to be avoided. 'Verbatim reproduction' of extract from or paraphrasing of the PUC, fresh receipt, or any other part of correspondence or notes on the same file should also be avoided. Instead, summarized version of the issues raised in PUC, are to be brought on the note. Excessive noting with irrelevant context or repetition of context in the PUC may confuse the higher authority to take appropriate action and therefore, such noting should be avoided.
- IV. **All facts and materials:** Efforts should be made to bring all facts and materials including previous reference to the notice of the higher authority. Any instructions/orders passed by the higher authority on the body of the PUC should also be mentioned in the notes. The relevant provision of Acts and rules, Office Memorandum etc should be referred to and copy of the same should be made available in the file with proper flags, rather than reproducing the relevant provisions in the note.
- V. **Divisions of notes into some paragraphs:** A note will be divided into

some paragraphs. The first paragraph will give details of the paper under correspondence and what action has been sought for. Another paragraph should give the provision of the Acts, Rules, order etc for disposal of the case. And the final paragraph should weigh the arguments and make recommendation for action.

- VI. Placing of relevant Act/Rules etc:** Relevant Extract of the provisions of the Act, Rules and/or guidelines will be placed on the file and attention to it will be drawn in the note, rather than reproducing the relevant provision in the note, unless such an extract on the note is essential to arrive at a decision.
- VII. Margin of note page:** A small margin of about one inch will be left on all sides (left, right, top and bottom) of each page of the note sheet to ensure better preservation of notes recorded on the files as at times the paper gets torn from the edges making of the documents difficult.
- VIII. Confinement in actual point:** When passing order or making suggestions, an officer will confine his/her note to the actual points he/she proposes to make without reinterring/repeating the ground already covered in the previous notes. repeating the contents of the previous notes. If he/she agrees to the line of action suggested in the preceding note, he/she will merely append his/her signature. In case, he/she takes a decision different from the one suggested on file, he may do so giving reasons for his decision.
- IX. Initial of Dealing Hand and Officer:** The Dealing Hand will append his initial with the date on the left side just below his note. The Superintendent will also likewise put his dated initial on the left side just below the signature of the dealing hand or below the note, except when disposing of a paper within his powers in which case he will sign his name in full on the right hand side. An officer will append his full signature with date on right hand side. In recording the date with initials or signatures appended to notes, the month and the year should also be indicated along with the date.
- X. Maximum notes by Officer:** There should not ordinarily be more than two notes by officers including the Branch Officer, in addition to the office note. This can be achieved by discussing the important cases with their higher officers by officer at different subordinate levels.
- XI. Pasting of slip of officer:** When a higher officer passes an order or calls for important information on a slip of paper, the slip should be pasted on the note sheet concerning the file and the note given under it.
- XII. Ending of notes:** Care should be taken to see that notes submitted to higher officers for orders do not end at the bottom of a note sheet in such a way as would leave not sufficient space at the bottom for short orders to be passed. A blank note sheet should always be attached to the 'Notes' portion of the file.

15. Scope and Purpose of Note by Office

The office note will cover the following:

- I. to see whether all the facts, so far they are open to check, are correct;
- II. to point out any mistakes or mis-statement of facts;
- III. to draw attention where necessary, to the statutory or customary procedure and to point out the law and rules and where they are to be found;
- IV. to supply other relevant facts and figures available in the Department and to put up the Standing Guard File or Precedent Register;
- V. to state the question or questions for consideration to bring out clearly the points requiring decision; and
- VI. to avoid any opinions or comments regarding the action of officers or other Department and also to avoid any personnel views on the case.

16. Responsibility of Branch Officers regarding Office Notes and Drafts.

The Branch Officer will be responsible for the accuracy of the facts stated in the notes and drafts put up to the higher officers and will therefore, satisfy himself that the office has brought out the facts in the notes and drafts fully and correctly. Subject to any general or special orders enforce, a Branch Officer or higher officer should ordinarily dispose of the majority of cases coming up to him in his responsibility.

An officer will confine his note to the actual points without repeating the contents of. the previous notes. When he agrees with the recommendations made in the preceding note, he will merely append his signature.

There should not ordinarily be more than two notes by officers including the note by the Branch Officer, in addition to the office note. This can be achieved by officers at different subordinate levels discussing the important cases with their higher officers. After discussion an officer will take action as follows:-

- a. Where a subordinate officer agrees with his higher officer, he may pass the order and take responsibility for such a decision ; or
- b. where he does not agree with the higher officer, he will send the file with his views to the higher officer for passing orders ; or
- c. in important cases, that file, after discussion maybe handed over to the higher officer for giving a note or passing.

17. File and its Constituents

File means a folder consisting of related papers on a specific subject consisting of following main two parts:

- I. **Notes portion:** It contains notes recorded on a Paper Under Consideration. It contains process how decision is taken.
- II. **Correspondence:** It contains all incoming written communications that are input to take decision and office copy of communication sent by office.

When the 'notes' or the 'correspondence' portion of a file becomes bulky (say, exceeds about 100 pages on any side), it will be kept in a separate cover and marked 'Volume I'. Further action on the subject will be continued on a new volume of the same file, the cover of which will be marked 'Volume II' and so on.

18. Opening and Numbering of a New File

A new file will be opened in a branch with the orders of the Section Officer/ Superintendent or higher officer. Its title will be given by the Superintendent. 'A new file will be given a fresh file number. The file number consists of (a) initial letters used for identifying the Branch or office and the group of subjects ; (b) the serial number of the file in the File Register.

19. Title of File

The subject given to a file is called its "title". It should be as brief as possible but should give sufficient indication of contents of the file at a glance. The title is divided as follows:

- I. **Head:** The important word that is placed first in the title by which its alphabetical position in the index to the file register is determined and on which primarily depends the possibility of finding the title is called the head. The wording of the head should not be too common or general.
- II. **Sub-head:** The head will be followed by a sub-head or sub-heads which should be more indicative. The consideration to be borne in mind will be the same in selecting sub-head and sub-heads.
- III. **Contents:** After the head and sub-head will come the content. This must be brief and compatible with expressing clearly the exact subjects of the paper, it is good content.

20. Opening of a Part-File and its Constituents

A Part-File may be opened only when the main file is not likely to be available for some time or when it is desired to consult simultaneously other branches or officers and it is necessary for them to see the Paper Under Consideration.

The reference and page number in a Part File will be given in pencil. The Part File will be amalgamated with the main file as soon as the latter becomes

available. On amalgamation, the references will be revised and the page numbers will be given in ink. When more than one Part File is opened, each one will be given distinct number.

21. Separate File For Each Distinct Subject

There should be a separate file for each distinct subject. If the subject of a file is too wide or too general, there will be a tendency to place in it receipts dealing with different aspects of the matter which apart from -making the file unwieldy will Impede business. If the issues raised in a receipt or in the notes or in the orders are beyond the original subject, relevant extracts will be taken and dealt with separately in new files.

In some cases, however, it may become necessary to open a miscellaneous file to contain miscellaneous unimportant papers, on which further correspondence is not likely to arise.

22. Personal File

A personal file will be maintained for every member of the service administered by a Department. It will contain all establishment orders like appointment, leave, transfer and posting, punishment etc relating to the Government servant starting from his entry into the office. On transfer from one service to another, the personal files are transferred to the Department/Office concerned. In such case, the numbers of the personal files are changed according to serial number in the File Register for that service.

23. Modification of Notes or Orders

The higher officers should record their own notes giving their views on the subject, where necessary, correcting or modifying the facts given in earlier note. In any case, the replacement or modification of the notes which have already been recorded on a file, when file has been further noted upon by others, should not be permitted. Where a final decision already communicated to a party is found later on to have been given on a mistaken ground or wrong facts or wrong interpretation of rules due to misunderstanding, such withdrawal may have also legal implications. In all such cases, in addition to consulting the Law Department, wherever necessary, such a withdrawal should be permitted only after the approval of an officer higher than the one, who took the original decision, has been obtained and reasons for the reversal or modification of the earlier decision have been duly recorded on the file.

Pasting over a note or a portion of it to conceal what has been recorded is not desirable. Where a note recorded in the first instance requires any modification on account of additional facts or any error having come to notice, a subsequent note may be recorded, keeping the earlier note intact.

24. Standing Guard File

There should be Guard File in each Department containing all important Office Memoranda/Notifications/Resolutions issued by the Government in different Departments in a chronological order and this Guard File is called Standing Guard File. It is prepared and maintained in different parts subject-wise. Whenever any new decision is taken on the subject it will be suitably incorporated in the relevant section of the Guard File by the Section Officer/Superintendent or under his direction by the Dealing Hand. As soon as a new officer joins a Department, it will be the duty of the Superintendent to bring the Standing Guard File of the Department/Office to the notice of the officer concerned. The officer should study the file carefully.

25. Running Summary of Facts

To facilitate consideration and to obviate repeated recapitulation, a running summary of facts or a précis should be prepared and placed on the file in a separate folder labelled as such in every case in which it is evident that such a summary would contribute to its speedy disposal. This summary will also include the advice or views of other departments consulted in the matter but not opinions of individual officers within a department. It should be kept up to date, incorporating changes whenever further developments take place through a newer version. Running summary of facts will also be maintained in electronic form in a computerized environment. It will be the duty of the Superintendent and the Branch Officer to see —

- I. that a summary is prepared at the earliest appropriate stage in suitable cases;
- II. that a summary is kept up-to-date by making suitable additions as further factual developments occur.

The summary will be signed by the Assistant and Superintendent. The Branch Officer will be responsible for checking that all the facts have been fully and correctly brought out in it. He will also sign it. A higher officer making use of the summary may initial it as a note of having made use of that summary.

26. Oral Instruction by Higher Officers

Where an officer is giving direction (including telephonic, social media platforms and SMS) for taking action in any case in respect of matters on which he or his subordinate has powers to decide, he shall ordinarily do so in writing. If, however, the circumstances of the case are such that there is no time for giving the instructions in writing, he should follow it up with a written confirmation at his earliest.

An officer shall, in the performance of his official duties, or in the exercise of the powers conferred on him, act in his best judgment except when he is acting under instructions of an official superior. In the latter case, he shall

obtain the directions in writing wherever practicable before carrying out the instructions, and where it is not possible to do so, he shall obtain written confirmation of the directions as soon thereafter as possible. If the Officer giving the instructions is not his immediate superior but one higher to the latter in the hierarchy, he shall bring such instructions to the notice of his immediate superior at the earliest.

27. Channel for Submission of Cases

The channel for submission of cases will ordinarily be Superintendent-Section Officer-Branch Officer-Head of Office. However, the selected Assistant may be authorized to submit cases direct to Section Officer or Branch Officers. The Superintendent may be permitted to submit certain types of cases direct to Branch Officer and the Section Officer may also be permitted to submit file directly to Head of Office.

After orders have been passed by a competent officer, the files and receipts should go back to the Branch through all officers at intermediate stages dealing with all the subjects to keep them informed of the decision taken.

28. Level Jumping

Normally, the files are put to the next immediate higher authority. But, when a file by the Section Officer or the Branch Officer is put up to the Head of Office directly without routing through the middle-level officers, it is called level jumping. The level jumping is permitted only in the following cases:

- a. When a higher officer calls for the papers directly;
- b. Where by a specific order, it has been laid down that certain categories of cases will be put up directly to higher officers without passing through the specified intermediary levels.

29. Procedure of Referencing and Use of Slip

Referencing is the process of putting up and referring to connected records, precedents, rules, regulations; books .or any other paper having a bearing on a case. Such papers will be flagged with alphabetical slips to facilitate their identification. The slip "P.U.C." will be attached to the paper which is under consideration. No slip other than 'PUC' will be attached to any paper on a current file. Reference to such a paper will be made by quoting the number of the page in the margin in pencil. (i.e P6/n, P6/c etc.)

Books of Rules etc. referred to need not be put up on a file if copies are available with the officer to whom a case is submitted. This should, however, be indicated in the margin of the notes in pencil. However, if a book or a copy of rule etc, referred to is required to be put up on a file, it will not be kept inside the file cover but will be placed on top of the flap of the file board just below the string. The reference to the book is made by referring to its page number but no slip is pinned on the book. For facility of reference, however, a slip may be placed between the pages referred to.

30. Draft, its Preparation and Approval

Draft is rough sketch of communication to be issued after approval of the officer concerned. It is the manuscript copy of the order to be sent out to the concerned officer/department when the course of action is very clear. Except when the lines of action are obvious, a draft of communication proposed to be sent out will be prepared after orders have been passed by the competent officer indicating the terms of reference to be sent.

A Branch officer or a higher officer, where necessary, will himself prepare a draft and authorize its issue or submit to the next higher authority for approval. In other cases a draft will be prepared by the office.

All important drafts such as pertaining to policy matter having financial implication, requiring increase in the sanctioned strength of staff, major changes in a scheme and important communication to the MLA, MP, Chairman of Municipal Board etc should not be approved at a level lower than that of the Deputy Secretary. In some cases, it may be necessary to take approval of the Secretary or of Minister to the draft.

31. Wording of a Draft

A draft should –

- i. convey the exact intention of the order passed;
- ii. a draft should carry the message sought to be conveyed in a language that is clear, concise and unambiguous.
- iii. language used should be clear, concise and incapable of misconstruction besides being precise;
- iv. lengthy sentences, abruptness, redundancy, superlatives and repetition whether of words, expression or ideas should be avoided;
- v. The persons and offices to which the copies are to be endorsed with instructions regarding action to be taken by them should be clearly mentioned in the draft.

32. General Instructions regarding Drafting

While drafting a communication the following should be taken care of:

1. Sufficient space should be left for the margin and between successive lines in the draft for incorporating changes, additions, interpolation of words, etc.
2. Depending on the form, subject of the communication (including reminders) should be mentioned appropriately.
3. The enclosures, which are to accompany the fair copy, should be indicated at the bottom left of the page. A short oblique line in the margin will indicate that enclosures are to be sent along with the fair copy. Where copies of an enclosure referred in the draft are available and, therefore, need not be typed, an indication to that effect will be

given in the margin of the draft, below the relevant oblique line.

4. Urgency grading will be indicated on the top right corner, if required.
5. Where the communication to be sent is of an important or immediate nature, the mode of transmission, e.g. 'By Registered Post' or 'By Speed Post' or 'By Special Messenger', etc., will be indicated at the top right corner.
6. Where copies of the communication are to be endorsed to other authorities for information or for further action, proper endorsements will be indicated at the bottom left of the draft.
7. A slip bearing the words "Draft for Approval" should be attached to the draft. If two or more drafts are put up on a file, the draft as well as the D.F.A. slips will be numbered as "D.F.A. I", "D.F.A. II", "D.F.A. III" and so on.

33. General Instruction for Communication

The different forms of written communication and their methods of delivery generally used by a department are described in subsequent pages. Each form has a use and, in some cases, a phraseology of its own. Only black or blue ink will be used in communications. A small margin of about one inch will be left on all sides (left, right, top and bottom) of each page of communications to ensure better preservations of records as at times the paper gets torn from the edges, making reading of the documents difficult.

34. Different Communication

(1) Letter: A letter is the form used for all formal communication to Central Government, State Governments, subordinate offices and other offices such as Public Service Commission, High Court, University, etc. For district and subordinate offices, it is used to communicate with the Secretariat, Head of Department, Statutory bodies etc. But generally, it is not used for correspondence between different Departments of the Secretariat of the same Government and branches of the same office. A letter is composed of the following parts:

- a. The letter head should bear the name of Government and the name of office.
- b. File number and date of communication
- c. Name and/or organization sender;
- d. Name and/or organization addressee
- e. The subject should be written in clear term and will be brief.
- f. Reference should be mentioned if it is sent in reply to a previous letter.
- g. The language of the main text of the letter should be in first person or second person or third person. But if any memo copy is issued, the instruction if any, should be in third person.

A letter being a formal form of communication is addressed on behalf of a Department or Government to the Head of the Government/Organization by designation beginning with the salutation 'Sir'/'Madam' and those addressed to non-official individual or group of individual with 'Dear Sir' and ends with the subscription 'Yours faithfully'.

(2) Demi-Official Letter (DO): This form is generally used for making correspondence by one Government Officer with another with the purpose of drawing his/her personal attention in an official matter of importance and/or urgency. Since Demi-Official letter is addressed personally to an officer by name. It is written in first person singular in a personal and friendly tone with salutation " My dear. . ." /or "Dear. . . ." and terminating with " Your sincerely" signed by officer without mentioning his designation below the signature.

Demi-Official letter may be used for communicating with officers in other public officers except chief of the Constitutional authorities. In such cases, communications are addressed to the Secretary of such authorities. The communication to non-official may also take the form of a Demi- Official letter.

(3) Office Order: Office order is an instrument for communication of order or decision of the Branch or the Department in certain matter. It may be issued by the Branch Officer or higher officer for efficient disposal of business in the department. In the Administrative Department, normally, the office orders are issued in the following subjects:

- a. Distribution of works amongst assistants and officers;
- b. Manner of disposal of works e.g. level jumping, putting up of files to Minister;
- c. Instruction regarding attendance, cleanliness etc.;
- d. Prescribing Departmental Register, Forms etc;
- e. Removal of any particular defect noticed in the Department;
- f. Any other office procedure considered necessary.

(4) Order: This form is generally used for conveying-

- g. certain types of financial sanction; and
- h. for communicating final orders in disciplinary cases etc to the official concerned. The order is not addressed to anyone. Copies are endorsed to all the persons/authorities concerned.

(5) Circular: This form is used when important and urgent external communications received or important and urgent decisions taken internally have to be circulated within a department for information and compliance by a large number of employees.

(6) Minutes: A record of discussions is prepared immediately after the meeting and circulated to the other Departments concerned, giving date, time, venue of the meeting held, who chaired the meeting and list of participants, setting out the conclusions reached and indicating the Department(s) responsible for taking further action on each conclusion. In case it is perceived by participants of the meeting that the minutes recorded are not as per the understanding/perception of the participant, the same may be immediately referred in writing to the authority which has issued the minutes.

(7) Wireless/WT Message: This form of correspondence is generally used for communicating without station parties. The concise and brief sentences are used to make concise or brief statement and the grammatical rules are avoided. This form is used for law and order matter and also for relating to floods and other natural calamities. Further it can be used for any matter requiring priority attention. These messages also have priority grading viz.

- a. **Crash:-** It is topmost priority and is resorted in exceptional cases where the recipient has to take immediate executive action to save human life or to prevent damage to valuable property.
- b. **Immediate:** It is used for conveying important information relating to law and order for immediate attention.
- c. **Ordinary:** It is done in routine nature.

35. Communication to be addressed to Officer by Name

A communication may be addressed to an officer by name when it is intended that the matter should receive the personal attention of the officer either because of its secret nature or special urgency/importance or because some ground has already been covered by personal discussion and the officer to whom the paper is being marked would be in a position to record his views or give his decision straightway. When a paper is so marked to an officer by name, reminders pertaining thereto may also be sent to the same officer (or he has since been transferred, to his successor) or a higher officer by name. A demi-official letter will, however, always be addressed to an officer by name.

36. Penalty for late attendance

Forfeiture of a day's casual leave will ordinarily be the penalty for three days late attendance consecutively. If the late attendance is habitual, the matter will be brought to the notice of the Secretary of the Department who may award such minor punishment which he considers necessary besides adverse entry in Character Roll.

37. Hours of Attendance for Peon (MTS)

Peons (Multi Tasking Staff) are responsible for the cleanliness of the office rooms and will attend office half an hour earlier than the hour prescribed for the staff. They will not leave office without the permission of the Superintendent under whom they work. Peons attached to officers will remain in office until their officers leave or until they are permitted by their officers to leave early

38. Leave Office during Working Hours

A member of the office establishment will not leave the office premises during working hours without the permission of the Section Officer/ Superintendent of this branch or in his absence, the permission of the Branch Officer. On the last working day previous to two or more consecutive holidays (including Sunday) no Assistant or Computer Operator will leave office without permission of the Section Officer/ Superintendent concerned.

When a priority case requires action on the same day, a member of the office establishment concerned will not leave the office without the permission of the Superintendent in case of the Assistant, Computer Operator etc or of the permission of the Branch Officer in case of the Superintendent.

- I. during the leave period, the permission to leave the headquarters should be taken and the leave address should also be given;
- II. An abstract statement showing casual leave taken and late attendance will be exhibited in the last column of the Attendance Register and consolidated by the Superintendent immediately after the month is over.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is Dak?

Dak includes every type of written communication such as letter, interdepartmental note, file, fax, e-mail, wireless message which is received, whether by post or otherwise, in any department for its consideration. All incoming and out coming paper communications of an office are called Dak.



2. What are the Priority Marking and Timetable on its disposal?

The higher officer of the Branch or the Head of the Office can give priority marking on the receipt considering urgency of its disposal. The higher officers on their part should give such marking carefully. They should besides taking the nature of receipt into consideration, also keep in view the total priority work sent down to the office

The following kinds of priority marking only will be used:

- i. **Immediate:** Immediate cases should be taken up immediately on receipt by stopping all other works and should be put on the day of receipt or on the next working day.
- ii. **Urgent:** Urgent cases should be put within 3 days.
- iii. **Fixed Date:** Fixed Date cases should be given precedence over other cases of ordinary nature and flag should be attached indicating the date on which action should be taken.

The cases bearing no priority marking should be put not later than 7 days.

3. How Logbook for Dealing Hand is used?

Every Dealing Hand will maintain a logbook indicating his day to day disposal of receipts and files in the prescribed format. After making entries in the Receipt Register, the Receipt or Diarist will distribute the receipts to the Assistants concerned recording the Receipt number on the Log Book.

4. What is page number in the file?

There will be one page numbers in the correspondence part of the file also for the notes portion. Every page in each part of the file will be consecutively numbered in separate series. Blank intervening pages, if any, will not be numbered. The receipts or notes written or typed on both sides should be numbered on both the sides. The numbering will be done in the ink at the top right hand corner of the pages.

5. What is Docketing?

Docketing is the process of making entries in the “Notes” portion of a file about each receipt or issue number and date of the letter and from whom received or to whom issued. A receipt or issue will be docketed between two lines by writing across the page. The receipt will be entered in red and issue in blue-black ink. The page number of the communication will be shown just outside the margin.

6. What is File and its constituents?

File means a folder consisting of related papers on a specific subject consisting of following main two parts:

- I. **Notes portion:** It contains notes recorded on a Paper Under Consideration. It contains process how decision is taken.
- II. **Correspondence:** It contains all incoming written communications that are input to take decision and office copy of communication sent by office.

7. How a file is opened and numbered?

A new file will be opened in a branch with the orders of the Section Officer/ Superintendent or higher officer. Its title will be given by the Superintendent. 'A new file will be given a fresh file number. The file number consists of (a) initial letters used for identifying the Branch or office and the group of subjects ; (b) the serial number of the file in the File Register.

8. What is Personal File?

A personal file will be maintained for every member of the service administered by a Department. It will contain all establishment orders like appointment, leave, transfer and posting, punishment etc relating to the Government servant starting from his entry into the office. On transfer from one service to another, the personal files are transferred to the Department/ Office concerned. In such case, the numbers of the personal files are changed according to serial number in the File Register for that service.

9. What is Standing Guard File?

There should be guard file in each Department containing all important Office Memoranda/ Notifications/ Resolutions issued by the Government in different Departments in a chronological order and this guard file is called Standing Guard File. It is prepared and maintained in different parts subject-wise. Whenever any new decision is taken on the subject it will be suitably incorporated in the relevant section of the Guard File by the Section Officer/ Superintendent or under his direction by the Dealing Hand. As soon as a new officer joins a Department, it will be the duty of the Superintendent to bring the Standing Guard File of the Department/Office to the notice of the officer concerned. The officer should study the file carefully.

10. What should be the language of office notes?

The language of the note should be made in the third person. No note should be recorded addressing the officer to whom the file is put up in second person.

11. How much margin of note page is required?

A small margin of about one inch will be left on all sides (left, right, top and bottom) of each page of the note sheet to ensure better preservation of notes recorded on the files as at times the paper gets torn from the edges making of the documents difficult.

12. When Level Jumping is allowed?

Normally, the files are put to next immediate higher authority. But, when a file by the Section Officer or the Branch Officer is put up to the Head of Office directly without routing through the middle-level officers, it is called level jumping. The level jumping is permitted only in the following cases:

- a. When a higher officer calls for the papers directly;
- b. Where by a specific order, it has been laid down that certain categories of cases will be put up directly to higher officers without passing through the specified intermediary levels.

13. By whom Draft is prepared?

A Branch officer or a higher officer, where necessary, will himself prepare a draft and authorize its issue or submit to the next higher authority for approval. In other cases a draft will be prepared by the office.

14. When communication is to be addressed to officer by name?

A communication may be addressed to an officer by name when it is intended that the matter should receive the personal attention of the officer either because of its secret nature or special urgency/importance or because some ground has already been covered by personal discussion and the officer to whom the paper is being marked would be in a position to record his views or give his decision straightway. When a paper is so marked to an officer by name, reminders pertaining thereto may also be sent to the same officer (or he has since been transferred, to his successor) or a higher officer by name. A demi-official letter will, however, always be addressed to an officer by name.

15. What may be the penalty for late attendance?

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About the Author

Shri Satyen Das started his career in the Assam Secretariat in the Ministerial Services in the year 1990. He also worked in the Finance, General Administration, P&PG, Revenue Deptt dealing mostly with service matters. He retired as Joint Secretary of the Personnel and School Education Department on 31st January.

