

Chapter 37

Record Management

37.1 In order to improve office efficiency, it is necessary to follow the secretarial best practices as enshrined in the “ Manual of Office Procedure” issued by the DOPT. Accordingly it has been decided that:

- (i) Henceforth the ICAR headquarters as well as all the Institutes will handle files and office correspondence from initiation to consignment to records, as per office procedure laid down in the Manual of Office Procedure (MOP) of DOPT.(<http://www.darpg.nic.in>)
- (ii) Carry out a campaign to consign to record all files as per required procedure, regarding which detailed instructions are being given in paras 102 to 115 of MOP

37.2 A very recurrent departure from the best practices as given in the MOP is the opening of new files on receipt of any PUC whatsoever, without trying to link it to previous files or papers and, in several cases, without even entering new file properly in the file register. Therefore, the following special arrangement is being put into place with immediate effect.

- i) Whenever a new file is opened in ICAR Hqrs. or in any Institute, the SO/US in the case of Headquarters and the AAO/AO/SAO in the case of Institute will have to record a certificate on the file as follows:

“This is to certify that there is no current file on the subject in the office, and that the new file has been duly entered in the file register”

- ii) In case a part file is being opened, then:

It has to be stated by the SO/US or AAO/AO/SAO, as the case may be, that part file is being opened because the main file is under submission;

More importantly, the moment the main file is received it should be merged with the main file; by renumbering the note and correspondence portion of the part file, so that there is continuity of numbering in the main file.

- iii. As per Chapter XV of the MOP the Head of Department (Director in the case of Institute and a designated DS/Director in the case of Headquarters) is required to inspect office at least once a year. The Heads of Departments must carry out these inspections regularly, and during the inspections they must check the compliance of the instructions given above specifically apart from compliance of the MOP, in all its aspects.

37.3 All other requirements for proper maintenance of files are given in the MOP of the DOPT, which is available at the website named at (1) above

37.4 Consigning files to record is not an unimportant activity. In fact, it is a most important activity, because while doing our work we are creating record of current history, and

scholars in subsequent generations may be interested in looking at some of our actions and decisions for purposes of historical or sociological studies. It is also important because it removes non-current papers from offices to the record room, providing cleaner and more spacious working environment in the office, and reduces the risk of fire. Lastly, it is important because some of the record may be required subsequently, especially in relation to court cases and unless the record is properly consigned to record, it would be impossible at all to trace old record when required.

- 37.4.1 Therefore, with regard to consigning files to record as stated above, a special campaign is being carried out with the aim of bringing our recording up-to-date, within the current calendar year, i.e. by December 2010. For doing so, while instructions are available in the MOP (Chapter XII), the important aspects of these instructions are being specifically brought out in the instructions given below:
- 37.4.2 Each section shall maintain record of files opened during the calendar year in a file register as prescribed vide appendix 22 of the manual of office procedure. While opening a new file the Section Officer, or AAO in case of an Institute, will have to record a certificate on the first page as indicated in para 37.2.1(i).
- 37.4.3 A part file may be opened if the main file on a subject is not likely to be available for some time and it is necessary to process a matter without waiting for its return. However, the part file has to be merged with the main file as soon as possible. Movement of files and other papers shall be entered in the file movement register prescribed vide appendix 23 of the manual of office procedure.
- 37.4.4 Files shall be recorded after action on the issues considered in the file has been completed. However, files of a purely ephemeral nature such as casual leave records or circulars of temporary nature containing papers of little reference or research value may be destroyed after one year without being formally recorded.
- 37.4.5 The first step in recording of files is their categorization depending on importance and reference value. Therefore, in the beginning, categorization of files may be done by ADG/ Director/Deputy Secretary at the headquarters and Director/SAO in the institutes.
- 37.4.6 There are following three categories of recorded files.
- (i) Category 'A' meaning 'keep and microfilm/digitize' - This category covers
 - (a) Files of historical importance such as those listed in part 'B' of Appendix 25 of manual of office procedure.
 - (b) Files which have to be permanently preserved for administrative purposes (vide part 'A' of appendix 25 of manual of office procedure) and which have to be microfilmed/digitized because they contain:
 - a document so precious that its original must be preserved intact and access to it in the original form must be restricted to the barest minimum.

or



- material likely to be required for frequent reference by different parties.
- (ii) Category 'B' meaning 'keep but do not microfilm'- This category covers files which have to be permanently preserved for administrative purposes (vide part 'A' of appendix 25 of manual of office procedure) but do not warrant microfilming.
- (iii) Category 'C' meaning 'keep for specified period only' - This category includes files of secondary importance and having reference value for limited period not exceeding 10 years, these are the files which have not fallen either in Category 'A' or 'B'

37.4.7 Recording of files is to be done in the following manner :

To begin with the recording of old files may be done at the level of ADGs/Director/Deputy Secretary/Under Secretary/SAO/AO/AAO who may begin with say 10 files a day, and with time they may find it possible to screen more number of files per day. Once the back log is clear the recording may be done at the level of SO/AAO/Assistant.

37.4.8 Recording is to be, done in the following manner :

(A) Action to be taken in the section

- (i) indicate the appropriate category of record and in the case of category "C" also specify the retention period and the year of destruction on the file cover;
- (ii) where necessary, revise the title of the file so that it describes adequately the contents at that stage;
- (iii) get the file indexed in the manner indicated in para 107, chapter XII of the manual of office procedure unless it is retained for less than 10 years from the date of closing;
- (iv) extract from the file, copies of important decisions, documents, etc. as are considered useful for future reference and add them to the standing guard file/precedent book;
- (v) remove from the file all superfluous papers such as reminder, acknowledgements, routine slips, working-sheets, rough drafts, surplus copies etc. and destroy them;
- (vi) complete all references and, in particular, mark previous and later references on the subject on the file cover;
- (vii) pass on the file to the record clerk;

(B) Action to be taken in the record section

The record clerk shall take following action :

- (i) complete column 4 and 5 of the file register and correct the entry in column 2 where necessary';
- (ii) enter the file number in column 2 of the register for watching progress of recording (Appendix 24 of the manual of office procedure)

- (iii) write the word 'recorded' prominently in red ink across the entries in the file movement register;
 - (iv) indicate the year of review on the file cover in respect of category 'C' files;
 - (v) Prepare fresh covers, where necessary with all the entries already made thereon;
- 37.4.9
- (a) To ensure that the files are neither prematurely destroyed, nor kept for periods longer than necessary, instructions contained in record retention schedule should be followed
 - (b) Recorded files should not be kept in the section for more than one year after which they should be transferred to the departmental record room.
 - (c) The departmental record room should maintain a record review register as per appendix 30 of the manual of office procedure.
 - (d) A category 'C' file should be reviewed on the expiry of the specified retention period (reckoned with reference to the year of closing) and weeded out unless it is required to be retained for valid reasons.
 - (e) Category 'A' and Category 'B' files should be reviewed on attaining the 25th year of their life in consultation with the National Archives of India.
 - (f) Beginning in January 2011, and each year thereafter, the departmental record room should send to the sections concerned, the files due for review in that year, in 4 lots in January, April, July, September.
 - (g) Files received in the section for review should be examined by the Section Officer concerned and those files which are no longer required should be marked for destruction. Other files should be marked for further retention. Files having a bearing on departmental/court proceedings should not be destroyed until required.
 - (h) After review the files should be returned to the departmental record room.
 - (i) The departmental record officer should transfer category 'A' and 'B' files surviving the review undertaken at the 25th year of their life to the national archives.
 - (j) Files marked for further retention should be restored in the record room after making the required entries in the record review register in the case of category 'C' files . Files marked for destruction should be destroyed by the departmental record officer.
- 37.5. Each institute should have a designated record room and a designated record clerk. A note issued by the National Archives of India on the minimum requirements of a record room is available on ICAR website and may be referred to. Expenditure on account of furnishing of record room and other activities connected with recording of files etc. may be met from sanctioned budget grant for office expenses.



- 37.6 While at first, consigning files for record may seem a difficult task to the Head of Department, or even a boring one, it is a task that has to be done and it is a task which become easy as we go through it and get accustomed to the kind of records we are dealing with and the procedures that are prescribed for it. Each Director should keep a target of taking a decision on recording of files in respect of at least 20 files per day, and the Director would himself/herself notice that as the first two-three weeks pass, his/her own speed on disposing of such files would increase.

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