



दक्षिण पश्चिम रेलवे
SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

**Process Improvement
in
Office Procedures**

22nd May, 2018

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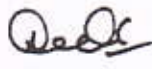
FOREWORD

In the course of day-to-day office working, it is seen that proper Office Procedures are not observed in dealing with correspondence. This includes, recording of views and decisions at different levels, communication of decisions and bringing issues to a logical conclusion. This results in delays, improper actions and dissatisfied Staff and Customers.

2. I am happy to note that a booklet on "Office Procedures" is being published by PCPO's Office. It is essential that good practices, some of which may be old, are revived and officials at all levels are insisted upon to adhere to them. The "Process Improvement in Office Procedures" is aimed at standardization and improving delivery in office working on South Western Railway.

3. It is necessary that these instructions on Office Procedures are given wide publicity and implemented immediately in right earnest on the Railway.

सं. No. SWR/P/R/64/Misc./Vol. I
Hubballi.
Date: 18.05.2018.


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GENERAL MANAGER

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PROCESS IMPROVEMENT – OFFICE PROCEDURE

INDEX

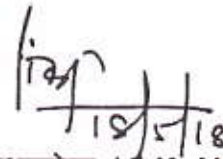
Sl.	Chapter No.	Topic	Page	
			From	To
1	--	Preamble	i	---
2	I	File is like a building – Keep it in mind.	1	4
3	II	Basic foundations - File maintenance and Noting	5	9
4	III	Communication of Decisions–Requires proper Decor	10	15
5	IV	Drawing Office Procedure – Heart of all Planning.	16	18
6	V	Joint approval of Drawings	19	21
7	VI	Office Environment	22	23
8	VII	Checklist for File Maintenance	24	25
9	---	Conclusion	26	---
10	---	Employees' Charter	27	28

PREAMBLE

The efficiency of an organisation depends largely on evolution of adequate processes & procedures and the ability of its employees to follow them. Good office procedures can meet even present days' needs of transparency, speed as well as required examination.

The job of a Clerk/ an official calls for intelligent application of mind, supported by the knowledge of rules and regulations. It is necessary to enrich the job contents of these cadres and to harness their individual talents. This can be achieved only by distributing responsibility equitably, so that every employee feels that he is a part of the organization and his role is important. Self-confidence thus created in individuals ultimately leads to the strength of the organization. Streamlining of the office procedures will pinpoint accountability and responsibility at various levels and will promote individual efficiency thereby leading to collective efficiency.

I would also like to place on record the invaluable guidance / input provided by Shri A.K. Gupta, GM/SWR, Shri T.P. Singh, GM/NWR & of Southern Railway Office in preparation of this booklet.



(एस. केअलबेला / S.K. ALBELA)

प्रमुखमुख्यकार्मिकअधिकारी

PRINCIPAL CHIEF PERSONNEL OFFICER

Chapter – I
File is like a building – Keep it in mind

1. Every staff display his/her name (printed on triangular cross section of fiber) kept on the table.
2. Every Ch.OS/ Office Superintendent/Clerk should have a distinct designation with the Department. The abbreviations of functions can be used, to indicate functional area.
3. Each initials made by an Office Superintendent/Clerk in any paper should be followed by his designation as defined in para 2 along with the date. (Bare initials can not reveal the identity of the owner of the initials. Date is considered inseparable part of initials/full signature.)
4. On the cover of each file, the name of the dealing Clerk/OS and the Ch.OS along with their designations should be written legibly in bold capital letters.
5. The Officers should not hesitate to call the dealing Clerk/OS (not necessarily the Ch.OS always) to discuss about the notings/letters put up by them. This will help to build up self-confidence, boost up morale and stimulate interest amongst the Clerks/Oss. It will be also possible to gauge whether the Ch.OS guides the Clerks properly.
6. Every letter/matter typed, should have the originator's name / nickname with date at the end, at left side bottom corner, such as TVK/9.8.17 or TVK090817].
7. Each dealer/OS should log his daily work in a diary. These diaries should be scrutinized by Ch.OS and officers periodically.
8. **Size of the Papers to be used**
 - 8.1 Only A4 size papers (29 mm x 297 mm) should be used for making office notes, letters, etc. so that these can file up in an uniform way in the folder which are designed only for A4 size. Big statements can be of A3 size which is folded to A4 size by a mid-fold; a second fold parallel to the first fold is necessary to keep the edge of paper free of file holes.

9. Routing of the letters received

- 9.1. Letters received in an office/department should be expeditiously 'pushed' forward by the Receiving Section. The Receipt Clerk should make an entry in the Receipt Register and mark a Serial Number with date of receipt on each letter received. **Dated rubber stamp** should invariably be used, so that the date of receipt is clearly visible. Computerized dak numbering is a good practice. The Receiving Section will also **super scribe** important/urgent letters in red such as **"Urgent", "MP's reference", "To be replied before"** Etc., to highlight the speed of disposal required. Also impression should be made on each letter received, using a rubber stamp to provide space for entering "Back reference" and "Forward reference" (BR and FR), which will be subsequently entered by the dealing Clerk as mentioned in para 14.5. After making the entry in the Receipt Register, the letter should be marked by the Ch.OS/Office Superintendent/Clerk of the Receiving Section to the concerned officers in the hierarchy up to the terminating section. For example, a letter received from Headquarters/State Government on a subject of land at a particular station should be marked to Sr.DPO, DPO and Section. The marking should be **in red** and should be logged towards the right hand side of the letter. Marking in the margin area should be avoided in order to ensure immediate visibility even after the letter is filed. In case a letter has more than one page the marking should be on the top page only.
- 9.2. In case the first officer decided that the letter should be seen by any officer/section, not in the marking list, he should include the same.
- 9.3. If the letter deserves to be acted upon by more than one section, photocopies should be taken and marked to such sections. For example, a public complaint should go to the Grievance Cell through ADRM and also to the concerned Branch Officers, such as Sr.DCM, Sr.DEN. For such a situation, photocopies should be resorted to.
- 9.4. The first officer should also see whether the routing of the marking made by Receiving Section is correct. Otherwise, he must change the whole routing.

- 9.5. Sometimes, a Branch Officer may receive an important letter from the Head of his Department in Zonal Office, which deserves to be brought to the attention of the Top Officer controlling the Branch Officer. In fact such a situation should not arise if the Corporate Office is alert. Still such slips do take place. For example, important instructions on waiver of wharfage and demurrage charges may be issued by PCCM to Sr.DCMs without copies to DRMs. Important verdict of CAT may be circulated by PCPO to Sr.DPOs, without appraising DRMs by copies. Vital directives on land utilization may be issued by the Railway Board to Principal Chief Engineer, without endorsing copies to GMs. In such cases, the Branch Officer should send a copy of the letter for the information of the top officer, whose guidance should be taken while taking action on the letter and for replying the letter.
- 9.6. Sometimes a report may be received under a covering letter. An officer seeing it in Dak pad may detach the report for studying and may pass on the covering letter forward. In such a case, he should make an endorsement on the covering letter to the effect that the report is kept with him.
- 9.7. It is Ch.OS/OSs' responsibility to ensure that Dak Pads are not stagnant due to officers going on leave/tour. He should bring to the attention of other link officers any important letter awaiting urgent action.
- 9.8. The Ch.OS/Office Superintendent/Clerk of the Receiving Section who marks the letters should therefore, have a sound overall knowledge of the functions of the office, to ensure that the papers reach the right officials in a fast manner. When urgency and priority warrant, he should walk to the concerned officer with the letter or fax or mail and seek his advice for immediate disposal. Only such involvement will indicate that the Ch.OS is dedicated to the corporate objectives. In addition, the Top Officer should note down in his personal diary the details of important letters received which required prompt reply/ action and he must repeatedly check on the same, without entirely leaving the matter to Ch.OS/OS or Clerks.
10. Sometimes more than one letter may be received in one envelope from the same source. The Receiving Section should carefully separate them and treat them individually, by marking to the respective officers and sections.

11. Except in obvious or routine cases, the line of action to be taken should be indicated by the Officer in order to guide the Officers/Staff below. Endorsement by the Officer should not be in the margin on filing side. If this discipline is not followed, it will be difficult to see the endorsement after filing the letter. In case the lower official needs guidance, there should not be hesitation to consult the higher official directly. It is a crime to keep any letter without taking action, not knowing what to do. Officers and Ch.OSs should go round in the section and take up with clerks keeping too many loose letters without filing and processing.

12. Important letters needing urgent action and letters on policy matters should not be kept in circulation on Dak Pad. The original should go to the file immediately and only the photocopy should be circulated. It is the Officer's responsibility to ensure this.

If the letter deserves to be acted upon by more than one section, photocopies should be taken and marked to such section/sections.

13. Routing of the letter within the office and recording of orders on the action to be taken are very important facets of office working. To quote a specific case, an important letter on MACPS sent by PCPO and received by a Sr.DPO, was not circulated to other DPOs, APOs and Supervisors of the Department, because of the simple reason that the Sr.DPO did not endorse "Circulate to all concerned" on the letter and the Ch.OS did not visualize the importance of the subject for ensuring career benefit.

Chapter – II

Basic foundations – File maintenance and Noting

14. Good practices in filing papers

14.1. The filing procedures should facilitate easy retrieval of information, apart from eliminating possibility of manipulations at a later date.

14.2. Double side files should invariably be adopted, with Folio side (correspondence side) and noting side (pp side), so that the internal discussion and rationale for decisions are kept on record.

14.3. Assigning Folio No.:

Folio Nos. should be written in red and rounded at right side top corner. In case a letter has more than one sheet, individual folio Nos. should be given to each sheet.

14.4 Docketing of a letter kept on Folio side, on the PP side

The docketing of each letter (on Folio side) received and dispatched should be done in red on the PP side by writing the Folio NO., originator and addressee of the letter, Reference No. of the letter, date of filing, brief description of the subject and reproduction of the endorsement recorded by the officer, when it was put up to him in Dak pad, as mentioned in para 11.

An example is given below:

"Folio-51/1-3:- From GM/P/SWR to all DRM/Ps.

Ref. No. P.65 Dated

Date of filing:

Sub: Allowance overtime other than Running Staff.

Sr.DPO's endorsement: "Notify AllAPOs".

Some offices adopt the practice of earmarking sheets on PP side exclusively for docketing. This is not a good practice. The docketing should be done along with other notings on PP side in chronological order. This will authenticate the date of filing and will also ensure that any letter is not replaced for unethical purpose by anybody.

Sometimes a spare copy of a circular/letter/any other document is temporarily kept on Folio side, to which a reference has been made in the noting being put up on PP side for consideration by officers. If the intention is to remove this document after the noting is considered, there is no need to give Folio No. and to docket the same. If however, the referred document is important and if it is desired that this should continue to be available in the file, Folio number should be given, along with the docketing on PP side.

14.5 Giving 'Back Reference', 'Forward Reference' Folio Nos.

A rubber stamp should be used with space provided for writing the backward and forward references. Impression of this rubber stamp should be done by the Receiving Section itself as mentioned in para 9.1. When the dealing clerk writes the backward reference on a new letter, the forward reference should also be entered on the earlier letter on this subject. For example, for the letter just being filed and assigned with folio NO.78, the backward reference could be folio No.35. This should be indicated in the rubber stamp impression on folio 78, apart from indicating Folio 78 as forward reference on Folio No.35. When such a chain of BR and FR folio numbers are entered, any particular case can be quickly studies, hopping over the papers not relevant.

- 14.6 Under "Subject" or in the text of the letter being filed, there may be reference to an earlier correspondence. In such cases, the respective folio numbers should be indicated by underlining and indicating the folio Nos. in red. In some cases, the back reference may be in a different file, in which case, not only the folio No. but also the case file No. should be indicated.

15. Processing in File

- 15.1 Whenever the contents of a letter on Folio side is discussed through a noting on PP side, the clerk concerned should examine the issue in the light of the provisions in the codes, various circulars, precedents etc. The noting must be in a good English/Hindi in legible handwriting. Long sentences should be avoided. Indiscriminate use of 'and' leads to ambiguity. Whenever a case/issue is discussed on the noting side, the arguments must be presented in a logical way and also the events in chronological order. This will help the higher officer to appreciate the subject in a short time, since he has to deal with a number of files converging to him.

- 15.2. The noting on PP side should not end without leaving space for orders. There should be at least one or two blank papers on PP side while passing on the file from one official to the next official. The dealing clerk should ensure this. Further, he should mend files which are damaged. New volume of the file should be opened promptly when the volume (files up above 200 pages) in use bulges to unhandy size
- 15.3. It is not proper to merely connect Folio Nos. and put up to Officer concerned with an endorsement like "For orders please". The Clerks are expected to use their intelligence in analyzing the issue and come up with suggestions to help the Officer to take decision faster.
- 15.4. In the noting prepared by a Clerk/OS, there should be, as far as possible, specific expression of opinion. Decision making need not be the monopoly of officers only. Opinion expressed by clerical cadre becomes decision when the officer of appropriate level approves the opinion. This however, does not mean that the officer should not resort to lateral thinking or utilize this practical knowledge and outlook. In case the opinion of the lower official is over-ruled by the next higher official, the reason for the same should normally be recorded by the latter.
- 15.5. When a note originating from one level goes to the highest level for orders, the intermediate officials should not merely initial and pass on the file. They should make endorsements, such as, "I agree", "Recommended", "I do not agree because" Etc.
- 15.6. When a chain of notings is put up to the Top Officer, the last Officer who marks the file to the Top Officer should summarise the issue and seek for specific orders. In trivial cases, such a summarizing may not be necessary. In some instances, it so happens that one issue is discussed in different stages and the notings continue on several pages, sometimes in an interrupted fashion due to intervening notings on other issues. It is not correct to mark such a chain of notings to Top Officer with an endorsement like "For orders please". The last officer who marks the file to Top Officer should make a self-contained note, giving cross references, to folios and earlier notings. Such a summarizing exercise not only deepens the insight into the issue, but may also generate solution to the problem.

15.7. In the notings, the Folio Nos. should be cross-connected. It is a desirable practice **not to use pins** to attach folio-flags to avoid making too many holes in letters. It is seen that such flags remain forever with rusted pins. It is also a bad practice to attach **Flags** A, B, C etc. and to give references to A, B & C in the notings. It is proper to use only the assigned folio number as **reference** tool.

15.8 Dealing of issues of continuous nature in isolated papers or in 'Pilot files' should be discouraged. The cases should be put up on the concerned file, such as, repair proposal for individual vehicles, cash award proposals etc.

16. Letters received from higher office (Headquarters or Board) pertaining to **policy matters** should be very carefully dealt with. These should invariably reach the policy file concerned without delay and docketed. In the meanwhile, photocopy may be circulated to various officials concerned. However, it should be ensured that photocopies of the same letter do not get filed again and again, making the file unnecessarily bulky.

17. Policy matter file should not be used for filing ordinary correspondence, letters, reminders, etc, even if these arise in connection with the same subject.

18. Each policy/technical circular file should be provided with the following label/ sticker on the top of the file.

POLICY FILE, NOT TO BE DESTROYED

19. Use of urgency grading:-

- (i) The urgency grading advised are "Immediate", "Priority" and "Top Priority".
- (ii) The label "Immediate" will be used only in cases requiring prompt attention. Amongst the rest, the "Priority" label will be used for cases which merit disposal in precedence to others of ordinary nature. "Top Priority" will be applied in extremely urgent cases.
- (iii) "Lok Sabha" / "Rajya Sabha" labels shall be used for appropriate cases which merit disposal in precedence to others of ordinary nature

20. A file index register will be maintained by Chief Office Supdt. Of department concerned. Before opening a new file, the dealer will ascertain the standard head to which the paper under consideration relates. A suitable title will be proposed consisting of standard head, sub-head which will be more indicative of the precise subject and a brief content indicating the question or issue under consideration. As far as possible there should be a separate file for each distinct aspect of the subject.

21. Custody of Files

Every office maintains its records through a set of files. Each section under the charge of an Ch.OS/OS may have the files in accordance to the work allotted to staff working under him. These files are under the custody of dealing clerks. It is the duty of each dealing clerk to maintain the files assigned to him/her. Every individual dealer (Jr. clerk/Sr. clerk/Office Supdt.) working under a Ch. OS is the custodian of a file he/she is dealing with. He/She will maintain a list of those files under his/her custody as a permanent record in a register; or in a Personal Computer. He/She is responsible for monitoring files movement. If loose files are required to be initiated, as soon as they have served their purpose, should be merged back into the main file on the corresponding subject.

Chapter – III

Communication of Decisions – Requires proper Decor

22. Issue of letter based on decision recorded in file

22.1. Each letter being issued should be earnestly condensed and compressed as "One page letter", which is invariably effective and appealing at the receiving end. The wordings should be short, but express the meaning fully. Very long sentences should be avoided. For the sake of bringing the main points within one page letter, supplementaries can be shifted to **Annexures**. Yet another advantage of one page letter is the economical and fast reproduction by photocopy. The age old method of starting a letter as "With reference to your above letter, it is stated that" should be avoided and the subject and the subject matter can be straightaway jumped into.

22.2. Whenever a draft letter is put up for approval in the file, references to Folio Nos. of the relevant earlier correspondence should be indicated on the draft.

General instructions for drafting:-

- (i) A draft shall be clear and concise.
- (ii) The number and date of the last communication in the series, and if this is not from the addressee, his last communication on the subject, shall always be referred to. Where it is necessary to refer to more than one communication or a series of communications, this shall be done on the **margin** of the draft. When two or more communications are to issue from the same file on the same date, a **separate serial number** may be inserted at the end of file Number indicated to avoid confusion in reference, E.g. SWR I/P/464/O&M (1); SWR I/P/464/O&M (2)
- (iii) The name, designation, telephone number, fax number and e-mail (wherever applicable) of the officer signing the communication shall be indicated in the communication.

22.3. After the approval of the draft, the letter should be fair typed keeping in mind presentation, accuracy, correctness of spelling, etc. While placing the finally typed copies of the letter to the officer for being signed, the clerk/OS/Ch.OSs should affix the initials and designation on the office copy, to signify that the correctness of the typing has been verified by him. In case a letter is put up for Top Officer's signature, the Branch Officer concerned should also record his initials on the office copy of the letter. Reference to Folio Nos. should be indicated on the office copy, even at the stage of putting up the letter for signature, as done during draft stage as indicated in para 18.2.

22.4. Letters to outsiders should invariably be typed using letter heads, containing the logo of the organization. Hand written letter sent to outsiders projects a poor image of Railway. In most of the cases, letters to outsiders should start with "Dear Sir/Sirs" and end with "Yours faithfully". Railway abbreviations should not be used and the expressions should be courteous and in speaking order, avoiding the usual Railway style. Railway's Phone number, Fax Number and E-mail address should be available in such letters. These formalities should be strictly observed also for the letters addressed to Commissioner of Railway Safety, Railway Trade Unions, Container Corporation, KRCL, RRB, RITES, IRCON, IRCA, IRFC, Registrars of RCT, RRT & CAT and, last but not the least, to any retired Railway employee, irrespective of his pre-retirement grade.

22.5. At the end of the letter, just below the space earmarked for signing, both the name of the signing officer and his designation should be available. Sometimes, argument is put forth, such as, "It is well known who is the Sr. DPO; why to incorporate his name?". Such arguments should be stopped forthwith and **incorporation of name** should be followed as a regimental discipline. The indication of the name increases the sense of responsibility on the part of the signing officer and it also enhances the credibility of the letter at the receiving end. However, the notings made by officer/official on the PP side of file need not be signed with name, but only the designation and the date of signing will do.

Sometimes an excuse is put forth for not typing the name of the signing officer, that it was not known who will finally sign the letter when the same was being typed. This is not acceptable. In such cases, which will be few in numbers, the name should be added after signing, at least by neat hand writing in capital letters.

22.6. Sometimes a Note or Memorandum is prepared and sent to various officials. This should be treated as a letter and the name of the signing officer should be available. There are two kinds of Notes: one meant for being sent to official C routed through officials A & B and the other for being simultaneously sent to A, B & C. The format of the Note should clearly indicate to which kind this belongs.

22.7. Even Ch. Office Superintendent can be authorised to sign some letters, but his name and designation followed by "for xxx" should be available below his signature.

- 22.8. The designation, in some cases, may be followed by the authority of the head of the office, such as, "Joint Director (A&B), for Director General".
- 22.9. Replies to important letters should be dispatched with the approval of the competent authority, in which case the last sentence of the reply should be **"This is issued with the approval of"** if the letter is signed by somebody else. In fact it is desirable that important replies (such as to MPs, top officials of other Government departments, senior executives of firms, etc) are signed by the Top Officer or by officers of equal status.
- 22.10. Normally demi-official letters should not be issued among officers with the same office. There is no harm in super scribing normal letters as "For kind/immediate attention of Sri/Smt." If deemed fit.
- 22.11. After the letter in the final form is signed, the office copy should be assigned Folio No., filed and docketed on PP side. The docketing may also indicate, such as, "Issued as per the orders/endorsement of _____ at PP/F.No/ _____".
- 22.12. The office copy should have Dispatch Reference or endorsement such as "sent through special messenger Shri on". This will help in investigation, in case the letter does not reach the destination in time. Also scanned copies of letters can be sent through Email, fax etc., for quick communication.
- 22.13. Preserving of the corrected draft should be based on a careful discretion. Whenever the corrections made by the signing officer significantly change the ideas or financial implications, such drafts should be preserved, duly assigning Folio Number and docketing.
- 22.14. Any letter should invariably be prepared, with a clear listing of the enclosures to be attached, even in the draft stage. Enclosure should be specific such as "Copy of letter in Sheets", "Annexure A in sheets". "2 copies of Plan No." etc. The practice of stating **"Enclosure: as above" should be avoided.** Correct listing of enclosure will help the dispatch clerk. If he fails to send the enclosures correctly, all round delay and confusion will occur. The office copy of a letter should also have the office copies of its enclosures and these sheets should be assigned folio numbers. However, if the enclosures are already available in the same file, duplications should be avoided and the respective folio numbers should be indicated under the enclosure list of the office copy.

22.15. When a reply is issued to any other office within Railway or to outsider, under the heading "Ref." at the beginning of the reply-letter, it will be appropriate to give reference to the letter No. of the addressee. There is no point in giving only our own office letter No. as the past reference, since the other party will not be able to locate the same easily in their office.

22.16. Many times, letter from higher authority (say, Railway Board) is transmitted by the intermediate authority (say, PCPO) to the lower authority (say, Sr.DPOs). The covering letter issued by the intermediate authority should not be of routine type, such as, "for information and necessary action". On the other hand, the covering letter should briefly indicate the significance of the directives contained in the annexed letter. If some specific action has to be taken or information has to be compiled, the covering letter should communicate further guidelines, target for compliance, proforma for compilation (if not forming a part of the annexed letter), etc. If the directives require introduction of a new system, the method and responsibility for implementation, monitoring, furnishing of feed-back, evaluation, etc. should be spelt out in the covering letter

22.17. Whenever 'Confidential' or 'Secret' letter is issued or received, this should receive the required treatment strictly. It is the responsibility of the Officers, Personal Assistants and Confidential Assistants to ensure observance of the formalities. Such correspondence should not be allowed to be transmitted through normal dak pad. Depending on the extent of confidentiality, closed file and/or transmission by hand should be resorted to.

23. In the case of Tender Proceedings, Selection Committee's report etc., each manual correction should be initialed by the members of the Committee. The enclosures of the proceedings of the Tender Committee or Selection Committee (such as tabular statements) should also be jointly signed, in addition to signing each of the pages of the main proceedings. In the case of empanelment of staff, in selection/promotion, no manual correction shall be permitted in the typed list of finally empanelled staff.

24. When an officer is required to sign in a number of places (say 15) as in Agreement document, the places to be signed should be numbered in pencil such as 1/15, 2/15, ... 15/15, so that the officer can keep a watch while signing that no paper is skipped in between.

25. Indents on Stores Department should be prepared in a clear manner, preferably typed. If there are enclosures such as Detailed Specification, Drawing, Proprietary Certificate, Sanction Memo, List of Probable Suppliers, etc., the cross reference should be available on Indent as well as enclosures. It is often seen that these papers get separated resulting in unproductive correspondence and delay.
26. The dealing clerks are responsible to issue/put up reminders. They should not wait for instructions from the officer. Ch.OSs should also watch that important issues do not remain unattended due to failure to remind. Such an efficiency is achievable only if the dealing staff and Ch.OSs appreciate the importance of the subjects and show a sense of involvement.
27. The reminder should be so worded in a self-contained manner, that the Receiving Officer seeing it in Dak Pad can recall the subject readily and activate the persons concerned. By merely giving reference to letter number and stating "**your reply may be expedited**", the receiving office is kept in puzzle, till the previous correspondence is connected and thus the matter is delayed.
28. When an issue pertaining to establishment matter is put up to the Top Officer, the **Establishment Officer** should be the last Officer to mark the file to the Top Officer. In other words, the final option to comment on various suggestions given by the Branch Officers should be exercised by the Establishment Officer only. Similarly, in the case of involving financial implication. Finance Officer should be the last Officer, to pass the final remarks before putting up to the Top Officer.
29. Whenever sanction is sought, reference to the relevant item of Schedule of Powers should be given. If sanction is sought without routing through Finance, it should be confirmed that the sanction does not need finance concurrence as per Schedule of Powers. The funds availability and overall position of budget under the proper primary unit/sub-head should be indicated to guide the sanctioning authority. In case the Finance has made some observations while giving concurrence, convincing replies to these observations should be put up to the sanctioning authority by the executive department.

30. Checks on delays

- 30.1.** Timely disposal of receipts and monitoring of Parliamentary Assurances, Parliament Questions, Applications under RTI Act, MP/VIP References, CAT/Court Cases etc.

Time Limits will be fixed for disposal of as many types of cases as possible handled in the Department through departmental instructions. As a general rule, no official shall keep a case pending for more than 7 working days unless higher limits have been prescribed for specific types of cases through departmental instructions. In case of a reference remaining with an official for more than the stipulated time limit, an explanation for keeping it pending shall be recorded on the note portion by him. The system of exception reporting will be introduced to monitor the disposal of receipts.

For timely disposal and monitoring of Parliament Assurances, Parliament Questions, Applications under RTI Act, MP/VIP References, Judicial/Quasi-judicial, etc. each department shall maintain separate records of such cases.

E-Governance methods, suiting to the requirements, should also be adopted for monitoring and tracking of government work.

31. Maintenance of Records

- 31.1.** Weeding out of files and moving them to Record Room should be a continuous process. The Ch.OSs are responsible for this. There is a tendency to keep obsolete files and demand for more space and more racks. This should not be encouraged. There are circulars issued by Railway Board regarding identification and disposal of obsolete records, while retaining important papers, which serve as landmarks in the functioning of the organization, apart from possessing value as heritage and/or archives material.

31.2. Record Retention Schedule

To ensure that files etc. are neither prematurely destroyed, nor kept for periods longer than necessary, every Department will prescribe in respect of records, relating to respective department on establishment, personnel, records related to the department and housekeeping matters, follow the "**Record Retention Schedule**". For the guidance of different departments, the Record Retention Schedule available on Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances website www.darpg.nic.in, as amended from time to time, may be referred for guidance.

Chapter – IV

Drawing Office Procedure – Heart of Planning

32. Different categories of drawings and the method of recording approval:

32.1. Drawings prepared in an office may be classified into the following categories:

- A. Proposal pertaining to approved work, meant to serve execution
- B. Proposal for consideration, which may be approved in future
- C. Survey details recorded
- D. Enclosure for a report, paper or letter
- E. Type designs
- F. Completion drawing
- G. Miscellaneous

In fact, alphabets A to G (or any other notation) may be associated with drawing number in order to signify the type of drawing it belongs to.

32.2. The noting which seeks for approval of drawing meant for execution of work (i.e. Category A), should give reference to the item No. of Works Programme or List of Approved Works. The name plate of the drawing should indicate the item No. of Works Programme and space for writing the sanction No. of the estimate. The name plate should also contain the names of Draftsmen, Engineers and other Officers involved, along with their signatures and date. The approving authority should scrutinize the drawing in the light of the justification and the scope of the work as described in the Works Programme. In most cases, drawings of Category A require multi-disciplinary approval.

32.3. In case a drawing is made as draft proposal (i.e. Category B), not referring to any sanctioned work, misleading caption such as "Proposed extension to Running Room", etc, should not be given. The appropriate caption in this case can be "A tentative proposal for extending the Running Room". The origin for such a draft proposal, such as, Inspection Notes of GM, PNM subject, etc, should be mentioned in the drawing. Approval for this kind of drawing should also be got recorded in the file. The approving authority should scrutinize the scope of the proposal and ensure that the same is optimal.

32.4. Drawing of Category C prepared only for the purpose of recording the site information, soil particulars, etc., collected through a field survey / investigation, will be useful to serve as the basis for any proposal of addition or alteration, such as, new building, drainage scheme, yard etc. Such drawings should have the names and signatures of the staff who

are responsible for collection of details and depiction in the drawings. Though formal approval is not mandatory, the competent officer should verify the drawing for its completeness, before signing.

- 32.5. A drawing/sketch of Category D prepared only to serve as an enclosure to a letter or report, should have an endorsement to that effect, so that such a drawing cannot be mistaken as a proposal or as an approved work, at a later date. Formal approval may not be needed; but the originator of the letter or report should verify the drawing and sign.
- 32.6. Drawing of Category E pertains to the standard type designs, such as for, quarters, platform bench, water hydrant, signages, platform trolley for eatables, etc. These are normally prepared by Headquarters. There is no harm if Divisions, sub Divisions and Depots. Evolve type designs for trial, meant for standardization by Headquarters at later stage. Recording of approval by the competent authority is very essential in the case of drawings of type designs.
- 32.7. Drawing of Category F, i.e. completion drawing will serve as the reliable document of the asset created. Completion drawing, meant for being certified by the field engineers after the asset is created in full shape, should be carefully prepared. The descriptions in the completion drawing should be different from those in the drawing for execution. Writings such as "Suitable foundation to be provided", "Precast RC slabs to be laid on base concrete 1:3:6", etc should not be permitted in completion drawing. Instead exact details of foundation actually provided and precise specification of the works as executed should be available in the completion drawing. In short, working drawing gives directions, whereas completion drawing records history. Since most of the drawings are now-a-days made through AUTOCAD, the drawings prepared for execution can be altered as completion drawings, with much more ease than in the case of hand-prepared drawings. Completion drawing requires countersignature of competent authority, based on the field officers' certification.
- 32.8. Drawings which do not fall under any of the above said descriptions can be referred as 'Miscellaneous'. Approval may not be required in these cases.

33. When an estimate for a work is put up in file for sanction by the competent authority, the basic drawings which technically describe the location, scope and details of the work should also be kept in the file, so that the sanctioning authority can exercise cursory check on the completeness of the estimate with reference to the proposal and drawing. Intermediate officers, through whom the file is routed, should also check these aspects.
34. As soon as the original drawing is signed by the Top Officer, a clear print or photocopy should be taken and kept in the file assigning a Folio No. and docketing the same. Such a copy in the file should not have any manual correction superimposed. This becomes the permanent record of the approved version. If a correction is subsequently made in the drawing, the same procedure should be repeated after the amendment note on the drawing is signed by the competent authority. Whenever copies of an amended drawing are sent to the field officers/officials, it is necessary to call back the copies of the earlier version, so that they are kept out of circulation. Alternatively, field officers/officials should be asked to make bold entry in red on the obsolete copies signifying the receipt of the amended version. While investigating the cause of collapse of porch in a station building under construction, it was seen that the drawing with the supervisor and contractor was different from the original with the head office. This original had certain corrections without duly approved amendment notes. Such situations can be avoided by taking a clear print of drawing as a document to be preserved in file.

Chapter – V

Joint approval of Drawings

35. Drawings for joint approval by more than one Office/organisation

- 35.1. Whenever a drawing prepared by one Office (say, Construction Wing) is sent for approval of another office (say, Open Line), it should be insisted that the Originating Office should send 2 clear prints without any manual correction. In case, the Approving Office, suggests some changes, the Originating Office should carry out the corrections in the original tracing and send afresh two prints without any manual correction. After signing on both copies as token of approval, one copy should be returned to the originating office and the other copy should be preserved in the concerned file of the Receiving Office. This procedure will ensure unambiguous communication between the two offices and authentic record of the final arrangement mutually agreed upon. If the drawings are exchanged through magnetic media/ online / electronically, suitable security should be ensured.
- 35.2. If a drawing is made through a consultancy firm and is to be approved by an office of Railway, the same procedure mentioned in para 30.1. should be adopted.
- 35.3. A drawing prepared by a consultancy firm should have two distinct name plates. The name plate at right-bottom extreme should be in the lines of the usual name plate on Railway drawing, with the details such as "South Western Railway - Name of work - WP reference - sanction reference - Description of the component detailed in the drawing - Names of Railway officials verifying the design and drawing (prepared by consultant) and their signatures with dates" etc. The other name plate on the drawing should adjoin the Railway name plate on its left side and should contain details such as "Name of the consultancy firm - Consultancy Contract Ref. No. - Names of the firm's officials responsible for design, checking, drawing and counter checking and their signatures with dates.". Only after the signatures are made on the Railway name plate, the firm's drawing is authenticated as Railway drawing and is qualified for execution. It is sometimes noticed that accountability and responsibility are diluted, when drawings are prepared through consultants. The field engineers directly receive drawings from consultant without recorded approval of Railway. Such undesirable practices should be curbed.

36. Ammonia prints are outdated and are not legible if the shelf-life of the paper expires. These prints get bleached by sun light. Clear photocopies will greatly assist the field executives, for which the optimal solution lies in adoption of metric sizes A0 to A4. It is possible to scheme out even a big drawing with several views, split into main and part drawings, all fitting into A3 size. With drawings being prepared through AUTOCAD, it is all the more befitting to go in for handy size drawings (such as A3), while retaining the clarity of details.
37. Suppose, A3 size is really found inadequate for complicated drawing, A2 size can be adopted, because by folding this into two halves (each of A3 size) photocopies of both the portions can be taken and thereafter pasted.
38. The functioning of Railway is basically on technical principles. Even the Clerks should **learn** some fundamentals in technical matters. They should be able to understand and use units, such as square metre, hectare, wagon kilometer per day, etc. The standard units in CGS system (except special Railways notations such as NTKM, GMT, etc.) should be written in **small letters** without full stops, such as:

Metre	m	Not as M or Mtr.
Centimetre	cm	Not as CM or C.M.
Squaremetre	sqm	Not as SQ.M or M2
Cubic metre	cum	Not as CU.M or M3
Kilogram	kg	Not as Kg or K.G.
Tonne	t	Not as T
Millilitre	ml	Not as ML or M.L.
Kilometre	km	Not as Km, K.M. or KM
Kilometre per hour	km/h	Not as KMPH

Plural form should not be used in the above abbreviations. i.e. cm will stand for centimeter as well as centimeters. Km will stand for kilometer as well as ilometers.

39. Standard rail-sections such 75 R, 90 R, etc. should be written as such. These should not be converted into metric unit such as 37.27 kg/m and 44.73 kg/m. whereas the standard 52 kg and 60 kg rail sections should be written as such. In other words, original nomenclatures should not undergo unit conversion.

40. Railway abbreviations for stations, posts, etc., should not be used in conjunction with other organisations. Assistant Engineer, PWD, Hubballi cannot be shortened as AEN/PWD/UBL. District Collector, Dharwad cannot be referred as Collector/DWR. While addressing CAT in communications, appeals, etc., they should be invariably referred as Hon'ble Central Administrative Tribunal. While addressing non-Railway organisations, Railway abbreviations should not be used even for referring Railway items, since the recipient will find it difficult to decipher. For example, if a letter sent to a candidate freshly selected for IRSE asking him to report to GM/SWR/UBL, he cannot understand.
41. There exists the incorrect practice of indiscriminately prefixing "M/s." to all firms such as M/s IOC, M/s BHEL, M/s Indian Links, M/s. Syndicate Bank, etc. The correct way to refer them is The IOC, The BHEL, The Indian Links, The Syndicate Bank, etc. "M/s" can be prefixed only to firms containing names of Persons, such as M/s Shantilal and Sons, M/s Shah and Bros, M/s. Plasser and Theurer, M/s. Kumar and Associates etc. "The Kirloskar Electric Ltd." Is the correct expression, whereas for Kirloskar Bros. Ltd. the correct prefix is "M/s.".
42. The various paragraphs and sub paras in a letter or report should be given metric numbering system. It is easy to learn this system, just by going through some standard books, publications by RDSO, etc. Roman numbers such as I, II, III or i, ii, iii etc., should be sparingly used, since this is obsolete in the modern times. As far as possible, even sub-sub items should be numbered as 1.2,3 etc. or in a limited way serialled as a, b, c ... etc.

Chapter – VI
Office Environment

43. Office is a place where business is transacted or professional services are available. The activities of an office is collecting, assessing, storing, distribution of information and services.

Management functions include planning, organising, staffing, directing, communicating, controlling, co-coordinating and motivating staff and activities.

The Personnel functions include recruitment, training, placement, career development, appraisal, salary and wages, staff welfare, retirement and settlement etc.

44. Office environment has an important effect on the efficiency of office workers, his mental attitude morale, at times his health. People respond to their surroundings physically and emotionally. The following environment factors have a psychological effect on the employees.
- (a) Colour in the office walls, ceilings and floor coverings
 - (b) Standardisation of office furniture, equipment, machine tools and plants.
 - (c) Light in office sufficient quantity of well diffused illumination on working surface without presence of glare or sharp shadows.
 - (d) Noise in between 60-70 decibels
 - (e) Maintaining proper temperature, humidity circulation and cleanliness of office premises.

45. **JAPANESE PHILISOPHY OF "5-S" FOR IMPROVING WORK CULTURE**

1. SEIRI (SORTING OUT)

- (a) Look around your work area and weed out unnecessary items.
- (b) Rework the reworkable items.

2. SEITON (SYSTEMATIC ARRANGEMENT)

Item must be placed in prefixed locations for easy accessibility and use, frequently needed things to be kept neared to the workstation to save time and fatigue.

3. SEISO (SPIC AND SPAN)

- (a) Daily we should clear our workplace and machinery ourselves.
- (b) Do not throw things to avoid damage.

4. SEIKETSI (SERENE ATMOSPHERE)

To guard against your workplace from becoming dirty again continue to regularly practice SEIRI & SEITON.

5. SHITSUKE (SELF DISCIPLINE)

Exemplary housekeeping by yourself is the best way to motivate otherwise to independently follow good housekeeping disciplines.

46. Leaving Headquarters:

Every staff is expected to obtain permission of his superior when he intends to go out of the headquarters either during leave or holidays or otherwise. His outstation address will be indicated either in the charge report form or in a separate note so that he could be contacted in case of need.

47. Addresses of staff:

All staff are expected to intimate their residential address and any changes therein from time to time department concerned for being maintained for official use in case of need. Normally Section Officers and other supervisory staff will maintain list of residential addresses of the staff under their control and changes therein periodically.

48. Cleanliness of office surroundings

While staff like sweepers etc. have been provided for the purpose of dusting, sweeping and cleaning the office rooms and furniture etc. officers and staff themselves are expected to ensure that the tables and other furniture are neatly arranged and positioned in good order and repair. If need be, they may call on the servicing facilities available in the organisation for purpose orderly environment.

Chapter – VII

Checklist for File Maintenance

49. Following points may be kept in mind when files are dealt with :

1. Every file is created/ moved to take decision. This decision should be taken at the lowest level.
2. Filing of papers should be decent looking and helpful for the decision-maker.
3. New covers should be placed on the old/stained/torn file covers.
4. Drafts when the final letter is issued should be removed from the main file.
5. On occasion of putting up of the letters the back and forward references should be mentioned.
6. FP (correspondence side folio) and NP (noting side page) numbers should be written, preferably in the red ink. Also, on the left side top of every starting noting page shall contain the file number.
7. Outgoing letters should not be folded/pinned etc. which destroy their files.
8. Multiple copies of letters/orders/transfer orders etc. should not be stored in files.
9. Loose files should be generally avoided or if at all necessary for taking fast decisions, the papers should be immediately filed back in the relevant file.
10. Only A-4 size paper should be used which is the standard size of a Xerox paper. If papers available are large, say A-3 size, they should be neatly folded in A-4 size.
11. Every clerk should own his/her own pen, paper, highlighter, paper cutting knife, blue/red pen, stapler and punching machine.
12. Delay in decision making can be avoided if the time for disposal is scrupulously maintained. In normal case seven days time can be allowed to the clerks for putting up papers and seven more days for the officers for taking decisions. Any further delay should be explained on paper as to why it occurred.
13. Only the highest authority in office, viz, HOD of Deptt. Concerned or GM in Headquarters should use red colour pen/ink.
14. Multiple dak section in the office should be avoided particularly if it causes delay.
15. Inspectors must do their nominated works and not the clerical works. They should form the arms the of management in locating delays and tackling the problem head on.
16. Periodic house cleaning and removal of time barred records as per 5-s should be undertaken consistently.

50. Inspections :

Each section in the department should be periodically inspected to ascertain to what extent the provisions of office procedure are being observed. The Ch.Oss / Oss concerned will take necessary action to rectify the defects pointed out in the inspection report.

51. Security of Office and Official documents :

Every staff, Supervisor and officer is a custodian of records that are with him. Apart from the above, all are jointly responsible for any mishap/loss to the Railway record and property. Necessary arrangement for opening of office early for cleaning made and laid down. For important records like service records and confidential files, cupboards with keys should be used. If needed the staff should have spare cupboards. Spare keys of the cupboard should be made available with supervisor who will see that work does not hamper in absence of a particular dealer.

Unless authorised by general or specific orders, no official will communicate to another official or non-official any information that has come into his possession in the course of his official duties.

52. Conclusion

- 52.1. These office procedures by themselves cannot bring about efficiency or improved work culture, unless the clerks/Oss acquire a reasonably good knowledge of the manuals and codes of the department. The system established by these procedures will however act as a catalyst to enhance the inquisitiveness of staff and to elevate the thinking power of decision-makers.
- 52.2. By going through all these procedures in one stroke, one may wonder, whether the archaic colonial procedures are being revived. But in reality these procedures are very logical and easy to be followed once transformed as habitual; thereafter these render the system fast-acting and right acting. Accountability is the key note of modern management. The procedures stipulated in this circular establishes accountability in clear terms. Even as we shift to "paperless office" with extensive use of computers, the basic principles contained in these procedures will hold good and have to be incorporated into the software of office working.
- 52.3. Whereas the importance of counseling and training cannot be underestimated, many of the avoidable lapses can be eliminated and the work-culture can be upgraded by implementing these rationalized office procedures.

Wish you all the best

EMPLOYEES' CHARTER

Sl. No.	Item	Time Line	
1	Redressal / Disposal of staff grievances / representations received in different portals like Single Window Cell, CPGRAMS, Nivaran (including cases of re-fixation, seniority, MACP, arrears, promotion etc.)	30 working days from receipt of application	
2	Personal interview with DRM	Same day (If DRM is not available, then interview will be with ADRM concerned)	
3	Compassionate Appointment	Cases approved at Divisional level	90 days
		Cases requiring approval from HQ	60 days in Division + 30 days in HQ
4	Payment of settlement dues	Superannuation: on date of retirement	
		VRS/Death/Resignation: 60 days (for non-disputed cases only)	
5	Promotion through selections and suitability	Within one year of issue of previous panel	
6	NOC for own request transfer including mutual transfer	Disposal of application within 15 working days of receipt (except forwarding of application or rejection of case)	
7	Sending call letters to candidates selected through RRB and RRC including verification of panel from RRB/RRC	Within 30 working days of operation of panel	
8	a) Approval of various types of advances / loan	Administrative sanction within 7 working days	
	b) Disbursal of advances / loans & arrears after approval	With salary in the next billing cycle (as applicable)	
9	PF withdrawal	Administrative approval of competent authority within 7 days of receipt of application	
		Disbursal to be done within 7 days from the date of approval	
10	Issue of PF statement	Same day	
11	Viewing of Service Record	Once a year	
12	NOC for higher education, property transaction, passport, deputation	14 working days from receipt of application where Vigilance clearance is not required & 30 days in other cases	

Sl. No.	Item	Time Line	
13	Disposal of D&AR cases	Major – 150 days Minor – 31 days	
14	Issue of Pass / PTO	1 working day	
15	Sanction & payment of CTG / OT / TA	Sanction within 45 working days from date of receipt of claim from employee Disbursal to be done with salary in the next billing cycle (as applicable)	
16	Provision of essential amenities for staff	Provision of ladies toilet and changing room in offices where there are more than 5 female employees working	By March 2018
		White washing of office buildings (including station)	Every year
		Filtered water for identified / nominated offices	Within 60 days of issue of charter
		Fans and desert coolers in identified / nominated offices	Within 60 days of issue of charter
		Provision of PC & internet connectivity as per stipulated norms	Within 6 months of issue of charter
17	Disposal of leave applications	a) Casual Leave	1 working day
		b) LAP/Maternity leave / Paternity leave	7 working days
		c) Ex-India leave	30 working days
18	Issue of seniority leave	Once every year	
