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Ministry of Jal Shakti
Department of Water Resources, RD & GR
(O&M Section)

Room No. 5, 'B' Wing,
Ground Floor, Shastri Bhawan,

New Delhi, the 24th December, 2020

Office Memorandum

Subject: Records Management - Implementation of provisions of Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedures (CSMOP) on Recording of Physical Files - regarding.

The undersigned is directed to invite attention to Para 104 (1) (a-g) under Chapter XII of Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedures (13th Edition, 2010) (copy enclosed) that deals with procedures for recording physical files/records in Government Ministries/Departments.

2. Recently, during Annual Inspection of Departmental Records Room (DRR) of this Department located at Central Soil & Materials Research Station (CSMRS), Hauz Khas, New Delhi by National Archives of India representative, it has been observed that some of the files sent to DRR have not been recorded as per provisions contained in ibid Paras of CSMOP by concerned Sections.

3. All Wings/Divisions/Sections are therefore, requested to strictly comply with the above provisions while recording physical files before sending to DRR.

(Rajan Bhasin)
Under Secretary(Coord)
Tele: 23074033

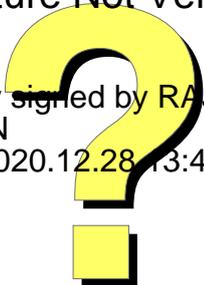
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To:

All Wings/Divisions/Sections under this Department

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CHAPTER XII

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

102. Activities involved in records management

- (1) Records management covers the activities concerning mainly recording, retention, retrieval and weeding out.
- (2) Each record creating agency will nominate, in pursuance of provisions of the Public Records Act, 1993 and the Public Records Rules, 1998, a Departmental Records Officer (DRO) who is not below the level of a Section Officer for overall records management of the organization as a whole and liaison with the National Archives of India.

103. **Stage of recording**—Files should be recorded after action on the issues considered thereon 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 keeping for one year without being formally recorded.

104. Procedure for recording —

- (1) Action for Recording :

After action on the issue(s) considered on the file has been completed, the dealing hand/initiating officer, in consultation with his supervisory officer, should close and record the file in the manner prescribed below :

- (a) indicate the appropriate category of record (vide para 105 below) and in the case of category 'C', also specify the retention period and the year of review/weeding on the file cover; for non-file documents, indicate the number of years for retention on the front cover.
- (b) where necessary, revise the title of the file so that it describes adequately the contents at that stage;
- (c) get the file indexed (vide para 107 below) unless it is to be retained for less than 10 years from the date of closing.
- (d) 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/standing note/precedent book/reference folder, etc.;
- (e) remove from the file all superfluous papers such as reminders, acknowledgements, routine slips, working-sheets, rough work drafts, surplus copies, etc., and destroy them;
- (f) complete all references and, in particular, mark previous & later references on the subject, on the file cover;
- (g) pass on the file to the record clerk;

- (2) Action on Recorded Files

The record clerk will thereafter :

- (a) complete columns 4 and 5 of the file register and correct the entry in column 2 (i.e. the subject, if revised), where necessary;

- (b) enter the file number in column 2 of the register for watching progress of recording **(Appendix 24)**;
- (c) write the word 'recorded' prominently in red ink (*make suitable entries in computer environment*), across the entries in the file movement register;
- (d) indicate page numbers and other references (except references to alphabetical slips) in ink which were earlier made in pencil
- (e) indicate the year of review on the file cover in respect of category 'C' files;
- (f) prepare fresh covers, where necessary, with all the entries already made thereon; and
- (g) hand over the file to the daftry/peon.

(3) The multi skilled staff will repair the damaged papers, if any, stitch the file and, show it to the record clerk for making entries in the register for watching progress of recording **(Appendix 24)** before keeping it in the bundle of recorded files.

105. **Categorization of records** :—Files may be recorded under any one of the following categories :

(1) *Category 'A' meaning 'keep and microfilm'* -This categorization will be adopted for :

(a) files which qualify for permanent preservation for administrative purposes (vide part 'A' of **Appendix 25**) and which have to be microfilmed because they contain :

(i) 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 to avoid its damage or loss; or

(ii) material likely to be required for frequent reference by different parties simultaneously/frequently.

(b) files of historical importance such as those listed in Part 'B' of **Appendix 25**.

(2) *Category 'B' meaning 'keep but do not microfilm'* -This category will cover files required for permanent preservation for administrative purposes, such as those listed in part 'A' of **Appendix 25**. It will, however, exclude the nature of material falling under the category described in (i) or (ii) of sub-para (1) (a) above and therefore need not be microfilmed.

(3) *Category 'C' meaning 'keep for specified period only'*. This category will include files of secondary importance having reference value for a limited period not exceeding 10 years. In exceptional cases, if the record is required to be retained beyond 10 years it will be upgraded to B Category.

106. **Stage of indexing** - Files will be indexed at the time of their recording. Only those files which are categorized as 'A' and 'B' (vide para 105) will be indexed.

107. Manner of indexing -

- (1) While preparing a file for record (vide para 104) the dealing hand or the desk assistant will underline :
 - (a) the 'index head', i.e., the standard head or the most important catch-word in the standard head which will naturally occur to any official searching for the file and which will determine the position of the relevant index slip in the consolidated index; and
 - (b) the 'index sub-head', i.e. the catch-word or catch-words in the standard sub-heads and/or the 'content' of the title which will give a further and more specific clue to the file under search.
- (2) Where the functional filing system is followed, files need not be indexed under the basic, primary, secondary and tertiary heads for which the classification scheme itself will provide the master index. However, such files will have to be indexed under the catch-words used in the content part of the title which falls outside the standardised headings.
- (3) After index heads and sub-heads in the title have been approved by the section officer/ desk functionary, the record clerk/desk assistant will:
 - (a) type out in duplicate, as many index slips as there are index heads and sub-heads underlined in the title;
 - (b) distinguish the index heads from the sub-heads by typing the former in capital letters;
 - (c) indicate at the top of the index slips all the heads and sub-heads mentioned in the title, one below the other, followed by the complete title of the file and the file number, as per specimens in **Appendix 26**.
 - (d) allot a pair of slips to each index head and sub-head by scoring out entries relating to the others as per specimens in **Appendix 26**.
 - (e) arrange the index slips in two sets, one in alphabetical order of the heads/sub-head for use in the section, and the other in the sequence of file numbers for the use of the compiler of the departmental index;
 - (f) keep each set of a paper index slips in separate spring clip folders for each year; and
 - (g) indicate the date of indexing on the file cover and initial it in the space provided for the purpose.
- (4) Index slips will normally be typed on good quality paper. In the case of important files requiring frequent and urgent reference, however, card indices could also be prepared. Even here, the duplicate set meant for incorporation in the departmental index will be typed on good quality paper. Card indices, where maintained, will be kept according to an alphabetical order of their respective catch-words, in a single series for all the years. Each department will issue departmental instructions specifying the categories of file in respect of which card indices will be maintained.
- (5) To ensure consistency and facilitate consolidation of departmental index, files relating to parliamentary business will be indexed not only under the appropriate standard heads and sub-heads but also, under the nature of such business, e.g. parliament questions, cut-motion, resolutions etc.

108. Custody of index slips—

- (1) Index slips will remain in the custody of the record clerk.
- (2) After all the files relating to a year have been recorded, the set of index slips in respect of that year meant for use within the section (viz. that arranged in alphabetical order) will be neatly stitched and the stitched compilation kept at a convenient place for reference by all concerned.

109. Compilation of departmental index —

- (1) The index slips pertaining to files relating to a year will be sent to the compiler of the departmental index one year after the close of the year to which they relate. If some files of that year still remain current even at the time of sending the index slips as envisaged above, the dealing hand, with the approval of the section officer, will prepare index slips in respect of such files as are likely to be retained for 10 years or more from the date of recording. These will also be added to the set of slips being sent to the compiler of the departmental index.
- (2) The compiler of the departmental index will :
 - (a) edit the index slips by :
 - (i) allowing the full title to appear only on the main index slips, i.e. those indexed under the index heads; and
 - (ii) scoring out the title on the subsidiary index slips, i.e. those indexed under the index sub-heads and giving a cross reference to the relevant index head, as per specimen in **Appendix 26**.
 - (b) arrange the index slips received from different sections, in alphabetical order in a single series for the department as a whole; and
 - (c) arrange for the printing or cyclostyling of the consolidated departmental index for each year.

110. **Precedent Book**—Every section will maintain a precedent book in the prescribed form (**Appendix 27**) for keeping note of the important rulings and decisions having a precedent value for ready reference. Entries in this record will be made at the earliest opportunity and, in any case, at the stage of recording the file.

111. Record Retention Schedule—

- (1) To ensure that files etc. are neither prematurely destroyed, nor kept for periods longer than necessary, every department will :
 - (a) in respect of records connected with accounts, observe the instructions contained in Appendix 13 to the General Financial Rules;
 - (b) in respect of records, relating to establishment, personnel and housekeeping matters common to all departments, follow the 'Record Retention Schedule' in Respect of Records Common to All Ministries/ departments', issued by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances.

(c) in respect of records prescribed in this Manual, observe the retention periods specified in **Appendix 28**; and

(d) in respect of records connected with its substantive functions, issue a departmental retention schedule prescribing the periods for which files dealing with specified subjects should be preserved, in consultation with the National Archives of India.

(2) The above schedules should be reviewed at least once in 5 years.

112. Custody of records—

(1) Recorded files will be kept serially arranged in the sections/desks concerned for not more than one year, after which they will be transferred to the departmental record room. For files due for such transfer the register as at **Appendix 24** will be consulted.

(2) In the event of transfer of work from one section to another, the relevant files also will be transferred, after being listed in duplicate in the form at **Appendix 29**. One copy of this list will be retained by the section taking over the files for its record and the other acknowledged and returned to the section transferring them.

(3) Files transferred by a section to the departmental record room will be accompanied by a list of files (**Appendix 29**) in duplicate. The departmental record room will verify that all the files mentioned in the list have been received, retain one copy of the list and return the other, duly signed, to the section concerned. In the record room, these lists will be kept section-wise in separate file covers.

(4) The departmental record room will maintain a record review register (**Appendix 30**) in which a few pages will be allotted for each future year. Category 'C' files marked for review in a particular year will be entered in the pages earmarked for that year in the register.

(5) Files of category 'A' and 'B' surviving the review on their 25th year of life [vide para 113(3)] will be stamped prominently as 'transferred to NAI' and retired to the National Archives. Files transferred to the National Archives will be accompanied by a list (in triplicate), one copy of which will be returned by the National Archives, duly signed, to the departmental record room.

(6) Record rooms will be properly ventilated, with adequate lighting and fire-safety equipment and avoid exposure to moisture. The records will be arranged serially section-wise and will be regularly dusted. For proper preservation, the records will be periodically fumigated and naphthalene moth-balls will be used.

113. Review and weeding of records —

- (1) A Category 'C' file will be reviewed on the expiry of the specified retention period and weeded out unless there are sufficient grounds warranting its further retention. Justification for retaining a file after review will be recorded on the file with the approval of branch officer/divisional head concerned. Retention after a review will be for a period not exceeding ten years, including the period already retained. If a file was originally retained for a period of 10 years, any further retention will require up-gradation of the category.
- (2) Category 'A' and category 'B' files will be reviewed on attaining the 25th year of their life, in consultation with the National Archives of India. In these reviews, the need for revising the original categorization of category 'B' files may also be considered.
- (3) The year of review of category 'C' files will be reckoned with reference to the year of their closing and that for category 'A' and category 'B' files with reference to the year of their opening.
- (4) Beginning in January each year, the departmental record room will send to the sections/desks concerned the files due for review in that year, together with a list of files in the form at **Appendix 31**, in four lots in January, April, July & September.
- (5)
 - (i) Files received for review will be examined by, or under the direction of, the section officer or the desk functionary concerned and those files which are no longer required will be marked for destruction. Other files may be marked for further retention vide sub-para (2) & (3). It may, however, be ensured that in case an inquiry has been initiated departmentally or by a Commission of Inquiry or as a result of Court proceedings having a bearing on the subject matter contained in the files/documents concerned or the files/documents which are required in connection with the implementation of order/judgment of any court of law, such files/documents will not be destroyed, even if, such files/documents have completed their prescribed life as per the Record Retention Schedule.
 - (ii) Files/documents referred to above may be, destroyed only after submission of the Report by the Commission or completion of inquiry or implementation of the judgment/order of the court(s), with the approval of the concerned Joint Secretary/Head of the Department concerned. In case the implementation of the court order has been challenged/appealed against either by the Government or by the applicant in a higher court, the relevant files/documents will not be weeded out until, such time the appeal/challenge is considered and finally decided. In such cases the limitation period prescribed for appeals should also be kept in mind.
- (6) After review, the record clerk/desk assistant will make entries of revised categorization/retention period in the file registers and return them to the departmental record room along with the list (**Appendix 31**) after completing column 3 thereof.
- (7) The Departmental Record Room, under the supervision of Departmental Record Officer (DRO), will :
 - (a) transfer category 'A' and category 'B' files surviving the review undertaken at the 25th year of their life vide sub-para (3) above, to the National Archives;

(b) in the case of other files :

(i) destroy those marked for destruction, after completing column 4 of the list of files (**Appendix 29**); and

(ii) restore the rest i.e. those marked for further retention, to the departmental record stacks after making the required entries in the record review register in the case of category 'C' files;

(8) Records not falling within the definition of file, e.g., publications, spare copies of circulars, orders, etc., will also be subjected to periodic reviews at suitable intervals and those no longer needed should be weeded out. To facilitate such reviews each section will maintain a register in the form at **Appendix 32**.

(9) Considering the urgency to reduce the volume of records being retained without any significant need for their retention, the following measures may be taken in the Ministries/ Departments :

(a) A special drive may be launched every 6 months to record/review all old files and to weed out those no longer needed. The results of such special drives will be submitted to the DAR&PG in the proforma shown in **Appendix 33**;

(b) Each Joint Secretary may review every quarter the state of indexing/recording/review/weeding out of files in his wing and allot such time-bound tasks towards this and to the members of the staff;

(c) Inspecting officers may be asked to pay special attention to the stage of Records Management in the sections as well as the Departmental Record Rooms during their inspections.

(10) The following manner of Weeding/Destruction of records will be adopted :

(a) Routine files/records will be manually torn into very small pieces and disposed.

(b) Other documents including classified files/records will be destroyed by incinerating (burning) or by shredding.

(c) Secret files/records will also be incinerated after being shredded as per provision under 'Departmental Security Instructions' issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

114. Records maintained by officers and their personal staff—Each department will issue detailed departmental instructions to regulate the review and weeding of records maintained by officers and their personal staff.

115. Requisitioning and restoration of records—

(1) No recorded file will be issued from the sections, departmental record room or Archival records except against a signed requisition in form prescribed under Public Records Act, 1993/ Public Records Rules, 1998 in the case of Archival records, and in the form at

Appendix 34 in the case of other records.

- (2) Requisitions for files belonging to other departments and in the custody of the National Archives will be got endorsed by the department concerned before they are sent to the Archives. If the requisitioned file happens to be a confidential one, the Archives will not supply the file direct to the requisitioning department but route it through the department to which it belongs.
- (3) The requisition will be kept in the place of the file issued.
- (4) If the requisitioned file is one that has been microfilmed or printed, normally a microfilmed or printed copy and not the original will be issued to the requisitioning department.
- (5) If a requisitioned file initially obtained for being put up in one case is subsequently put up on another, a fresh requisition should be given to the section daftry or sent to the departmental record room or the National Archives, as the case may be, for replacing the original requisition which will be returned to the office concerned. In the case of records obtained from the National Archives, the fresh requisition slip will be prominently marked 'change slip'.
- (6) On return, the requisitioned file will be restored to its place and the requisition returned to the section/official concerned.
- (7) Files obtained by a section from the departmental record room will normally be returned within 3 months. If they are not received back within this period, the departmental record room will remind the section concerned. For this purpose, the record room will maintain a simple register for keeping a record of the files issued to the various sections each month. A similar register will be maintained by each section as a record of files borrowed from it by other sections.
- (8) Files obtained by a department from the National Archives will not normally be retained for more than 6 months, except with the latter's specific knowledge and consent.