

Reading material on Office management

Section – 1: Meaning of a few terms

1.1 ‘Notes portion’ — The portion containing the processing of a case is called ‘Notes portion’. It contains ‘Notes’.

1.2 ‘Notes’ - The remarks recorded on a case to facilitate its disposal. It includes a summary of previous papers, a statement or an analysis of the questions requiring decision, indication of the rules/precedent/resource position, suggestions regarding the course of action and final orders passed thereon.

1.3 ‘Correspondence portion’ - The portion of file containing ‘receipts’ and office copies of the communications issued from the file including self-contained inter-departmental notes but excluding those recorded on the notes portion of the file itself. I be mentioned.

Section – 2: ‘Noting’

2.1 Objectives:

At the end of the sessions, the learner will be able to:

- 1) explain what noting is
- 2) explain the purpose of recording a note
- 3) identify noting skills required for effective noting
- 4) describe the concept of functional approach to noting (FAN)
- 5) apply the concept FAN to given situations
- 6) learn the process of developing a standard process sheet
- 7) get clarifications on noting skills

2.1 What is a ‘note’?

Note means remarks recorded on a case. Notes recorded by the President, the Vice-president and the Ministers are called *minute*. The purpose of a note is to enable the competent authority to take a decision and dispose of a case; or to bring the latest development on a case to any of the officers in the hierarchy who might be away from office due to being on training, tour or leave.

2.2 Contents of a problem solving or policy note:

- 1) Brief introduction or the context
- 2) Facts of the case
- 3) Additional inputs, if any, by office
- 4) Reference to and application of the provisions of policy, rules, regulations, guidelines or precedents to a given case
- 5) Suggested course(s) of action along with (financial and other) implications, if any
- 6) Details of the competent authority
- 7) Specific points on which decisions are required
- 8) Signature

2.3 Noting Skills

Action	On
Verify	Facts. Keep the source document or a copy of it in the correspondence portion of the file.
Supply	Additional facts, if any

Refer to	Provisions of the Act, Rules, Regulations or policy or guidelines or precedent, if any, applicable to take decision
Suggest	Course of action to resolve the problem
Assess	Implications: financial, legal, etc.
Indicate	Who the competent authority is
Specify	Points on which decision is sought. Do not simply state "Submitted for orders."

2.4 Guidelines to Decide the Level of Noting

Nature of Case	Level of Noting
No noting cases	No noting, obviously!
Correspondence Handling	Not more than 2 to 5 sentences
Repetitive cases	Develop and use Standard Process Sheet (a template)
Problem solving cases	Detailed note (see para 1.2) (Comparatively lesser than the one for the policy case)
Policy cases	More detailed (with segments to cover various aspects of the policy including the context / reasons for formulating the policy, including the views of the stakeholders)

2.5 Questions one needs to consider while examining a case

- 1) What is the problem?
- 2) How did it originate?
- 3) What is the nature of the case?
- 4) Is it worth detailed examination? (Apply the concept of functional approach to noting- See para 3)
- 5) Can it be broken into major and ancillary parts?
- 6) Does any part involve any other section/ department? If yes, send copy of the relevant communication to that section or department
- 7) Is there any provisions of Act, rule, policy, guideline, precedent available?
- 8) What are possible alternative solutions?
- 9) Which is the best solution? Why?
- 10) What are the possible implications?
- 11) If not worth detailed examination, is there any standard process sheet? Or can one be developed?
- 12) Who will finally take the decision?

Section – 3: 'Drafting'

3.1 What is 'drafting'

'Drafting' is the process of preparing a draft for approval by a competent authority. *Draft* is rough sketch of a communication to be sent after approval to the party or parties concerned. It may be modified by any of the officers in the channel of submission of the case to the competent authority. There could be occasions when a communication to be sent a junior officer is to be approved by a senior officer as a draft to communicate a decision taken by an authority higher than the senior officer. Thus, drafting is an outcome of the collective wisdom of the hierarchy in communicating a decision. For example, rate of dearness allowance payable to Government employees is decided by the Cabinet. The communication to communicate the decision is cleared by a senior officer before it is issued under the signature of a Under Secretary or Deputy Secretary.

3.2 Drafting Skills

S No	What to do while drafting?	Purpose
1	Identity	Receiver
2	Adopt	The right form
3	Visualise	Response
4	Express	Clarity, Consistency & Uniformity
5	Avoid	Redundancy
6	Summarise	Complex & lengthy communications
7	Ensure	a) Clear, Concise, incapable of Misconstruction b) Complete c) Facts, direction, guidance d) Unity of idea e) Easy of flow

3.4 Checklist for drafting

1. Is the draft necessary or fair communication be submitted?
2. To whom the communication is to be addressed?
3. What is the relationship between the sender and receiver?
4. What is the purpose?
 - a. To give information?
 - b. To get some details – if so, target date? Is a format attached?
 - c. Contact person, in case clarification needed?
 - d. To get something implemented? If so, target date? Guidelines?
5. Is the form of communication appropriate?
6. Have references been given: theirs; and yours?
7. Has the “DTC” [Delete/ Transfer/ Concise] technique been adopted while drafting?
8. Check whether the language used is:
 - a. Simple?
 - b. Concise?
9. Have the following details given?
 - a. Your complete address
 - b. Designation & telephone number, fax no & e-Mail
10. Salutation, where necessary
11. Subject, where necessary
12. Subscription, where necessary
13. Enclosures, if any
14. Urgency grading:
 - a. Immediate
 - b. Priority
15. Classification of the document:
 - a. Secrete
 - b. Confidential
16. Mode of dispatch:
 - a. By special messenger
 - b. By speed post
 - c. By Registered post, etc.

17. Receiver's complete address & fax number
18. Endorsement, if any
19. Follow-up with persons concerned that the communication has been received (in important cases and notice for important meetings)

Section – 4: FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

There are various forms of written communications used in a Government Department. Each form has its use and phraseology of its own. The occasions on which these forms are to be used and salient points regarding each form are described below:

1. **Letter:** This form is used for corresponding with Foreign Governments, State Governments, the Union Public Service Commission and other constitutional bodies, heads of attached and subordinate offices, public enterprises, statutory authorities, public bodies and members of the public.
A letter being a formal form of communication is addressed on behalf of a Department or Government to the Head of the Government/ organisation by designation, beginning with the salutation "Sir / Madam"; and ending with subscription "Yours faithfully."
2. **Demi-official letter:** This form is generally used in correspondence by one officers with another with the purpose of drawing his/her personal attention in an official matter of importance and/or urgency.
 - a. Since demi-official letter is written in the first person in a personal and friendly tone, it should be addressed by an officer to another of similar level /rank as far as possible. In the event of non-availability of officer of same level at receiving end, the same may be addressed to an officer at one level above or below.
 - b. Demi-official letter may be used for communicating with officers in other public offices except chief of the Constitutional authorities. In such cases, communications are addressed to the Secretary of such authorities. A Minister may communicate with another Minister at Centre or State Government or a Member of Parliament or State Legislature using d.o. letter.
 - c. Communications to non-officials may also take the form of a demi-official letter.
3. **Office Memorandum:** This form is generally used for communicating decisions to other Departments including its attached and subordinate offices. It is used for calling for or providing formation. Office Memorandum form is also used by Ministries and Departments for communicating to its employees. It is written in the third person and bears no salutation or subscription. The name and designation of the officer signing it will, however, be indicated.
4. **Order:** This form is generally used for conveying –
 - a. financial sanctions: and
 - b. Final orders in disciplinary cases. Order is not addressed to anyone. There is, therefore, no salutation or subscription. Copies are sent to all the person/authority concerned.
5. **Office order:** This form is normally used for issuing instructions/ intimation in routine internal administrative matters, e.g., grant of regular leave, distribution of work among officers and sections, internal posting and transfers, etc.
6. **Endorsement:** This form is used when a paper has to be returned in original to the sender, or the paper in original or its copy is sent to another Department or office, for information or action. It is also used when a copy of a communication is proposed to be forwarded to parties other than the one to which it is addressed.

Normally, this form will not be used in communicating copies to state governments, statutory/constitutional bodies. The appropriate form for such communication should be a letter.

Form of communication	Purpose	To whom	General
1. Letter	Seek or convey: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information • comment • decisions • directions 	a) Foreign Government (As per procedure laid down by Ministry of External Affairs) b) State Government c) Heads of attached and subordinate offices d) Constitutional authorities like Union Public Service Commission e) Central Public Sector Enterprises f) NGOs g) Member of Public	a) Salutation: “Sir” or “Dear Sir(s)” b) Subscription “Yours faithfully”. c) Official letter from a department to convey the views or order of the Govt. of India must specifically be expressed to have been written under the directions of Government d) Give telephone number and email ID
2. Demi Official Letter (DO Letter)	To inter-change or communicate opinion or information without the formality of prescribed procedure or where matter should receive personal attention due to importance or urgency	a) Another Govt. Officer (of more or less equivalent status). An officer in a Ministry/Deptt should address it, who is ordinarily not more than one or two levels below the officer to whom such communication is addressed (for this	a) Does not follow the formality of prescribed procedure. b) Written in the first person in a personal and friendly tone c) Name (without Shri or other honorific) designation and tel. No of the sender at the top of letterhead. d) Subject may be given in the first sentence to avoid a lengthy opening sentence. e) Begins with salutation “My dear” or “Dear Shri” or even “Dear

		purpose Secretary/Addl. Secretary/and Director/Deputy Secretary is considered as one level) b) Non-official	Sir/Madam” as may be appropriate and ends with phrase “With regards” and subscription” Yours sincerely”.
3. Office Memorandum (OM)	i) Inter departmental communication ii) To call for information from or to convey information (not amounting to an order of Govt. to employees.	a) Another Ministry/ Secretariat/Dept t b) Attached and Subordinate Offices c) Employees	a) Written in the third person b) Bears no salutation or subscription except name designation and tel. No. of signatory.
4. Order	To communicate financial approval or final decision in a disciplinary or vigilance case	Officers or Sections Units within the department	Copies are endorsed to the administrative/ financial authorities concerned
5. Office Order	To communicate internal administrative decisions like granting of leave, redistribution of work etc. (other than financial approval or final decision in a disciplinary or vigilance case)	Officers or Sections Units within the department	Copies are endorsed to the administrative/ financial authorities concerned
6. Endorsement	Reply on the original letter itself To forward copy to another Department or office for information or action	Sender of the original communication Another Department or officer	
