# IPC Section 466: Forgery of record of Court or of public register, etc.

## IPC Section 466: Forgery of Record of Court or of Public Register, etc.  
  
Section 466 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) deals with a specific, aggravated form of forgery: the forgery of records of a court or public register. Recognizing the severe consequences of tampering with such crucial documents, this section prescribes a significantly harsher punishment compared to the general offence of forgery under Section 465. It emphasizes the importance of maintaining the integrity and trustworthiness of official records.  
  
\*\*Text of Section 466:\*\*  
  
Whoever forges a document or electronic record purporting to be a record or part of a record of a Court of Justice, or of a public register of births, baptisms, marriages, deaths or burials, or a copy of such record or part of such record, with the intention of causing it to be believed that such document or electronic record or part of a document or electronic record is a genuine document or electronic record or part of a document or electronic record, commits forgery.  
  
  
\*\*Breakdown of the Section:\*\*  
  
1. \*\*"Whoever forges":\*\* This refers to the act of making a false document, as defined under Section 464. The various methods of making a false document, such as creating a fictitious document, altering an existing one, or using a genuine document falsely, all apply here. The key is that the document must be forged, meaning it is not what it purports to be.  
  
2. \*\*"A document or electronic record purporting to be a record or part of a record":\*\* The forged document must be disguised as an official record or a part thereof. This could include, for instance, a fabricated court order, a fake entry in a birth register, or a forged copy of a death certificate. The inclusion of “electronic record” brings digital records under the ambit of this section.  
  
3. \*\*"Of a Court of Justice":\*\* This includes any court, tribunal, or other judicial body authorized to maintain official records. Forging records of these institutions strikes at the heart of the justice system and can have far-reaching consequences.  
  
4. \*\*"Of a public register of births, baptisms, marriages, deaths or burials":\*\* These registers are vital for maintaining accurate demographic data and establishing legal identities and relationships. Falsifying entries in these registers can have serious implications for individuals and society.  
  
5. \*\*"Or a copy of such record or part of such record":\*\* This clarifies that forging a copy of a court record or public register entry is also covered under this section. Even if the original document is genuine, creating a false copy with the intention to deceive falls within the purview of this offence.  
  
6. \*\*"With the intention of causing it to be believed that such document or electronic record...is a genuine document or electronic record":\*\* The intent to deceive is a crucial element of this offence. The forger must intend for the false document to be accepted as a genuine record of a court or public register.  
  
  
\*\*Punishment (Section 466):\*\*  
  
Whoever commits the offence defined in Section 466 shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.  
  
  
\*\*Nature of the Offence:\*\*  
  
Similar to forgery under Section 465, forgery under Section 466 is a cognizable, non-compoundable, and bailable offence. The trial is conducted by a Court of Session.  
  
\*\*Examples:\*\*  
  
\* Forging a court judgment to claim ownership of property.  
\* Creating a false birth certificate to establish citizenship.  
\* Fabricating a death certificate to claim insurance benefits.  
\* Altering a marriage certificate to conceal a previous marriage.  
\* Making a fake copy of a land registry entry to deceive a buyer.  
  
\*\*Difference from Section 465 (General Forgery):\*\*  
  
The key difference between Section 466 and Section 465 lies in the nature of the document forged and the severity of the punishment. Section 465 applies to any forged document, while Section 466 specifically targets forged records of courts and public registers. The punishment under Section 466 is significantly higher, reflecting the greater potential for harm caused by tampering with official records.  
  
\*\*Significance of Section 466:\*\*  
  
Section 466 plays a crucial role in protecting the integrity and reliability of court records and public registers. By prescribing a harsh punishment for forging these documents, the law aims to deter individuals from engaging in such acts and maintain public trust in the justice system and official records. The increased penalty acknowledges the potential for widespread damage and disruption that can result from tampering with these vital documents. The section underscores the importance of accurate and trustworthy records for maintaining social order and protecting individual rights. It provides a strong legal mechanism for prosecuting those who seek to undermine the foundations of legal and administrative processes by forging official documents.