



BLOCK 4

MAILING PROCEDURES AND FORMS USED IN OFFICE

BLOCK 4 MAILING PROCEDURES AND FORMS USED IN OFFICE

This is the forth block of the course. In this block you will Learn about mailing procedures and forms used in office.

In offices, forms are widely used for communicating and recording the information. Office Forms and office Stationery are considered as the basic tools of all office operations. Also, it is important that every Office Manager should have sound knowledge of the procedure of handling of mail which is to be followed in an organization. This block has three units, which discuss the office forms, office stationery and mailing procedures.

Unit 10 Office Forms: This unit gives an overview of office forms. It explains the meaning of office forms, their advantages and disadvantages, and the procedure to design them. It also clearly distinguishes between the different types of internal and external forms usually used in an office. including details about the form control.

Unit 11 Office Stationery: This unit on office stationery enlist various stationery items generally used in an office and outline the importance of managing stationery. It also describes the factors usually taken into consideration while selecting office stationery in an office. And explains purchasing principles, purchase procedures and standardization of stationery.

Unit 12 Mailing Procedures: This unit explains the meaning and importance of mail, centralization of mail handling work, the importance of various Mail Room Equipment and accessories and use of Postal Franking Machine. It also highlights procedure of appending Files with Emails and the process of handling of Inward and outward mail.

UNIT 10 OFFICE FORMS

Structure

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10.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- know about the meaning of office forms along with its significance;
- design an office form;
- distinguish between the different types of internal and external forms usually used in an office;
- understand common types of fields used in a form;
- identify advantages and disadvantages of using forms; and
- exercise form control.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

We use forms in case we have to open a bank account, apply for admission in college, submit an application for a job opening, book railway reservation tickets, submit house tax application etc. Filling forms has become a fundamental way to obtain information which is crucial for completion of a task. In every office, forms are used widely to receive and record the desired information. Forms which are properly designed and filled are helpful not only to those who fill the information but also to the one who examines the information. In other words, a perfectly designed form should facilitate users to fill up quickly the required information with no confusion in mind. In an office, every department usually designs forms which are unique according to its functional areas so as to obtain essential but restricted information.

Due to Covid 19 Pandemic, as we all know, digital transformation is one of the major technological trends, which the organizations have observed. Accordingly, various office systems and work flows have changed so as to reduce corona virus transmission risk. As there is evidence that the virus can live on paper surfaces for a considerable period of time, use of paper-based forms have become minimal in office work. With the support of IT systems and processes, the companies are collecting and processing information. Further, as Paperless Office always enjoys benefits viz. efficiency, higher productivity, less errors, economy and so on, E-forms have gained wide acceptance to transmit and receive information.

10.2 MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF OFFICE FORMS

A form is defined as an arranged format which contains standardized and structured document having blank spaces for entering information. Forms are needed in order to receive the required information which is to be used to take desired action. Forms have proved to be very useful to reduce administrative overheads and are considered to be a tool for the office administrators. Information may be received and used in two types of forms – Paper Forms and E Forms.

Paper forms (also known as Physical Forms) are forms which are printed on paper and are filled manually. For example, to perform banking transactions personally when one visits bank, one has to fill-up required bank forms manually. However, in the era of paperless office, computer generated form also called e-form (electronic form) or web form are widely filled to transmit and receive information in an organization. Format of e-forms resemble paper forms and have a series of fields which web users need to fill online with the help of check boxes, radio buttons, text fields etc. It is evident that a considerable paper work is reduced and speed of operations increased with the use of e-forms. Due to these reasons, filling of on-line form is always preferred over a paper form.

Activity

As web users, if we wish to make an enquiry for a product or service from a commercial organization, the usual practice exercised is either of the two ways:

- Fill the Enquiry Form online by using the appropriate links provided by the organization's website.
- Download the relevant enquiry form, fill the same, take a print, scan and mail to the email address given at the organizational website.

Item/Group	Type	Qty.	Unit
IL-Coag-Hemosil dRVVT LA Positive Contrl	Item	0	No.s
IL-Coag-Hemosil dRVVT Screen	Item	0	No.s
IL-Coag-Hemosil Factor V Deficient Plasm	Item	0	No.s
IL-Coag-Hemosil Factor VIII Def. Plasma	Item	1	No.s
IL-Coag-Hemosil FDP	Item	1	No.s
IL-Coag-Hemosil FDP Calibrator	Item	0	No.s
IL-Coag-Hemosil FDP Controls	Item	3	No.s
IL-Coag-Hemosil Fibrinogen Clauss 10X2m	Item	2	No.s
IL-Coag-Hemosil PT-Fib. HS Plus	Item	29	No.s
IL-Coag-Hemosil RecombiPlasTin 2G(5x20ml)	Item	19	No.s
IL-Coag-Hemosil RecombiPlasTin 2G(5x8ml)	Item	-2	No.s
IL-Coag-Hemosil Reference Emulsion,500ml	Item	30	No.s
IL-Coag-Hemosil Rinse Solution 4L	Item	16	No.s
IL-Coag-Hemosil Special Test Contr Level	Item	0	No.s
IL-Coag-Hemosil SynthASil (Aptt)	Item	35	No.s
IL-Coag-Hemosil Wash-R Emulsion, ACL	Item	48	No.s
IL-Coag-Printer Paper Rolls 72mm	Item	16	No.s
IL-Coag-Protein C Hemosil	Item	0	No.s
IL-Coag-Rotors 20 Pos. 100/pk	Item	14	No.s
IL-Coag-Sample Cups (1000x0.5ml)	Item	4	No.s
IL-Coag-Sample Cups (2ML, 1000/PK)	Item	0	No.s
IL-Hemosil Liquid Antithrombin	Item	0	No.s
		341	

Figure 10.1: Example of an e Form

Significance of Office Forms

Office forms play an indispensable role in management of various administrative tasks professionally and proficiently. Usually, every business organization designs its own office forms according to its specific needs and provides individual recognition to the forms. These customized forms contain organizational logo so as to give unique feel of the company.

Office forms are the basic tool in the hands of administration as they-

- help the user to communicate only limited information
- provide space for writing restricted information.
- ease office operations.
- facilitate generation of multiple copies.
- increase the efficiency and effectiveness of office systems and procedures as carefully designed forms help in speeding up office operations.

E forms enjoy the following advantages:

1. Economy: As there is no cost involved in printing, a lot of money is saved.

2. **Easy Editing:** If at any point of time, the format of the forms is to be changed according to the information sought, designing of forms is easy.
3. **No Risk of Obsolete Stock:** If there is change of format, the already printed stock of paper forms becomes waste. With E forms, there are no chances of stock of forms becoming obsolete.
4. **Facilitates Convenience to Users:** Due to facility of editing of information while filling up the form, E forms are easy to fill.
5. **No Space Involved in Storage:** As forms are stored electronically, no space is used in storing and also, they can be accessed conveniently.
6. **Confidentiality of Information:** E forms maintain confidentiality of information in a better way as they can be protected with password.
7. E forms can be e-mailed and, if needed, these forms also help to retrieve search results from a search engine.
8. The information on e-forms is generally transferred to a computer data base, which may be processed and analyzed from a statistical point of view, as and when required.
9. Facility of printing or downloading of the form, if required.

10.3 DESIGNING OF OFFICE FORMS

Designing of office forms is considered to be both science as well as an art. It is important that before introduction of any new form in a department, approval of the competent authority is obtained. After obtaining the required approval, the process of designing new form is undertaken by the Office Manager. It is always helpful to do thorough study of required particulars which need to be included in the form before finally approving the contents and layout of a new form. The following needs to be emphasized while designing of office forms:

- Ascertaining the objective behind introduction of a new form. In other words, clarifying the specific purpose of the information to be collected.
- Mentioning of a self-explanatory form title.
- Including name and address of the department which is generating the form.
- Identifying the contents to be included in the form. Based on the contents only, the information will be filled.
- Sequencing the information logically from the user's point of view (name followed by contact details and not vice versa)
- Collecting the information that best meets user's needs.
- Providing ample space for filling up of required information.

- Adequate instructions, if required, for filling up the form.
- Simplicity and innovation in designing of forms.
- Appropriate size and overall layout of the form.
- Cost incurred and benefit to be accrued from the introduction of any new form.

In case of paper forms, the following additional points need attention while designing:

- Good quality of stationery to facilitate physical handling.
- Adequate consideration on printing style and color of paper, so that forms look good in appearance particularly when it is to be used by customers.
- Retention time period of forms.
- Multiple copies required of the form.

Any carelessness while designing of forms results in heavy financial burden on the organization. It is the duty of the Office Manager to design office forms judiciously to serve the designated purpose so as to make the office operations easy and cost-effective. A well-designed form has visual appeal that not only improves goodwill of the organization but also encourages users to fill the form (particularly important for product inquiries). In offices, before disposing-off any tool or equipment, it is customary to fill the details of the item in a form and obtain required approval from competent authority. A sample of this type of form is given below:

Inventory Department									
Stock Items For Condemnation In The Month Of May, 2022									
S. No.	Name of tool/equipment with specification	Store Ledger Folio No.	Name of Supplier	Date of Purchase	Quantity in hand	Unit Price (Rs.)	Total Amount	Reasons for condemnation	Remarks, if any

Note: This is to certify by the Technical Committee that the all the above tools/equipment mentioned have been thoroughly inspected and declared unserviceable and, hence, they may be disposed off.

Signature of Technical Committee

Thus, the basic purpose of introducing any form should be carefully analyzed and thorough examining of all the required information in the form is carried out.

Fixed information and Variable Information

Layout of a form used in an office contain two parts viz fixed information and variable information. Fixed information is that part of information which is essentially required in a pre-determined serial order. For fixed information, space is allocated as per the amount of information required (paper form) or necessary options given for clicking (e form). The information required from the applicant in a form is termed as variable information. However, it is to be ensured that every form should facilitate the applicant to understand and fill the required information against the appropriate columns.

After designing a form, the Office Manager must perform its usability testing. It helps to locate any flaws still left out and do necessary corrections to receive exhaustive and accurate information briefly in the best manner possible.

Check Your Progress A

1. What do you understand by the term 'Form'?

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2. Write any two points which indicate the advantages of E forms.

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3. What points should be emphasized while designing of office forms?

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4. State whether the following statements are True or False:

- a) A form is defined as a format which contains standardized and structured document having blank spaces for entering information.
- b) Usually, business organizations do not design their own office forms.
- c) Designing of office forms is considered to be both science as well as an art.

- d) It is not the duty of the Office Manager to design office forms judiciously to serve the designated purpose so as to make the office operations easy and cost-effective.
- e) A well-designed form has visual appeal that not only improves goodwill of the organization but also encourages users to fill the form.

10.4 FORMS USED IN AN OFFICE

There are different types of forms which may be necessary in an office to receive information in a ready-made format. Depending on the definite purpose, office forms may be of the following types -

- a) **Forms on the basis of Functionality:** Feedback Form, Enquiry Form, Education Loan Form, Purchase Order Form, Accounting Forms etc.
- b) **Forms used in Business Transactions:** Sale Invoice, vouchers, bills, delivery note etc.
- c) **Organizational Forms:** Forms used within the organization viz. Leave application form, Tour Advance Form, Medical Reimbursement Form, Performance Appraisal Form, Office Supplies Requisition Slip etc.
- d) **E Forms:** E Forms are available online and filled electronically.
- e) **Paper Forms:** Paper forms are filled manually by writing or on typewriters.
- f) **Single Copy Form:** One form is resource in itself to supply the information. E.g. application forms filled for recruitment.
- g) **Multiple Copy Form:** The form is used when two or more copies filled-in information is needed by different departments for necessary action. E.g. sale invoice, delivery note etc.
- h) **Continuous Paper Forms:** They are fan-folded forms with perforations meant for automatic feeding and removing. When invoices, cash receipts etc. are to be generated repeatedly, continuous paper forms are used.

10.5 INTERNAL OFFICE FORMS

Internal office forms, also called organizational forms, are designed specifically to meet the needs of day-to-day working within the organization. These forms are used so as to facilitate the management and staff to communicate and provide information speedily. As also stated above, leave application form, provident fund advance form, festival advance form, performance appraisal form, income tax calculation form etc. are internal office forms.

There are different types of forms required specific to each department due to varied departmental activities in an organization, which include purchase, production, finance, personnel, research & development, marketing, etc. Further, some forms are simple and of routine nature and do not require any sensitive information to be filled in. However, when there are security issues with some of the information in the forms, great care is exercised while handling with these forms.

Now-a-days, many companies facilitate its employees with the access of e-forms at company's portal, which can be used with the login-id provided to them. Internal office forms, if required, can also be downloaded from the organizational website. It may be noted that all Internal office forms have personalized and professional design with organization's name and logo, standard format, exhaustive important fields which need to be filled for providing information, enough blank space to fill up information, correct sequencing and layout and facility of printing or downloading of the form, if required.

In this section, we will learn about widely used internal office forms viz. Accounting Forms, Application Forms and Memorandum Forms.

10.5.1 Accounting Forms

Various types of Accounting Forms usually used in an organization are:

- Daily/Weekly/Monthly Work Sheet Form
- Pay Slips
- Tour Advance/Tour Claim Form
- Request for Advance/withdrawal from Provident Fund
- Income Tax Form
- House Building Advance Form
- Medical Reimbursement Form
- Leave Travel Concession Forms
- Advances for Purchase of Motor car/ Motor cycle/Personal Computer Form
- Reimbursement of Conveyance Charges
- Financial Ratios and Analysis Forms
- Depreciation and Amortization Forms, etc.

Common Form Templates

1. Calculation Form

This is calculation form template which is used in an organization when we have to perform a lot of mathematical calculations. Here, respondent gets an opportunity to see totals of previous number entries which facilitates when placing an order with multiple products, tracking expenses, invoice details and estimating costs.

2. Audit Form

This form template is used when we have to conduct financial audits to manage and record audit results. With this audit reports can be submitted online.

The above forms can be customized i.e., we can add a file, upload field, include our organization's logo etc.

10.5.2 Application Forms

Application forms are critically important to all companies, schools, colleges, NGOs etc. and are generally used in Human Resource Department in an organization. Various types of Application Forms which are usually used include:

- Leave Application Form
- Job Resignation Form
- Performance Appraisal Form
- Job Description Form
- Stationery Requisition Form
- Application to seek Permission to Visit Abroad
- Registration Form to attend Seminars, Conferences etc.
- Nomination of Provident Funds/Pension
- Employees' database forms (to record personal information usually in a form template viz. personal and job-related information)
- Background Check Application forms etc.

PERFORMA FOR LEAVE APPLICATION

- 1) Employee Name:
- 2) Designation:
- 3) Department /Branch:
- 4) Type of Leave applied for (Whether Earned Leave/Medical Leave, Half Pay Leave Maternity leave):
- 5) Period of Leave:
- 6) Date since leave is requested:
- 7) Whether station leave required:
- 8) Address during leave:
- 9) Details of last leave:
- 10) Reasons for leave:

Signature of Employee along with Date in case of paper form

Recommendations of Branch In-charge/ Head of office_____

Signature of Competent Authority in case of paper form

10.5.3 Memorandum Forms

These are feedback forms which good organizations use to take feedback from their employees, customers and public to create/maintain corporate image, increase efficiency and effectiveness, have better working atmosphere etc. Feedback templates are customized forms to capture all relevant information.

10.6 EXTERNAL CONTRACT FORMS

External Contract Forms, also called business forms, are usually based on organizational basic functionality. These are needed for survival and growth of business.

In a commercial organization, the external contract forms may be purchase orders, partnership agreements, loan agreements, invoices, cash receipts etc. For an educational institution, forms are required to be filled for admission, submission of fee, examination, scholarship, refund of security etc. In an organization, these forms are available for all types of office functions and communications.

Different types of External Contract Forms usually used in a commercial establishment are discussed below :

10.6.1 For Creditors and Customers

In business transactions, usually some product or services are sold on credit and money owed by one or more debtors. Now-a-days, specially designed business software is used which are incredibly simple to follow up pending payments. The form templates include customer information, order and invoice details, product specification, due date of pending payment, advance payment made by the customer, if any, and other important details. In other words, the templates help to keep a track of money due over from our debtors by sending reminders. These forms can also be customized to fit specialized business needs.

10.6.2 Order Forms

Order Forms also called Service Forms are efficient way to place and receive orders in business world. It is easy to use online request forms for making inquiries and placing an order on supplier's specially created order forms. Whether you wish to buy LCD or order a Pizza online, order can be placed in no time on web. All business forms have very high security standards.

It should be remembered that records of all business forms should be maintained securely if an organization wishes to survive and grow its operations. This becomes essentially important in case a dispute develops between the supplier and buyer at a later date.

The screenshot displays a software window titled 'Modify Supply Outward Voucher'. It contains a table with columns: S.N., Item, Qty., Unit, Price (Rs.), and Amount (Rs.). The table lists several items including 'IL-Gem 3.5k BG/ISE/GL 300-BGEM Cart.', 'IL-Gem 4k/3.5k Printer Paper, 78mm', and 'IL-Gem 4K CVP 1 With Coax'. To the right of the table, there are fields for 'Item Info', 'Batch No. Detailer', 'Palletizer Detailer', 'Disc. Rate', and 'Disc. Amt.'. Below the table, there is a 'Tax Summary' section with fields for 'Tax Rate', 'Taxable Amt.', 'CGST', 'SGST', and 'Total'. At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Vch. Detail', 'Master Detail', 'References', 'Party Dash Board', 'Update Discount', 'Check Scheme', 'Save', and 'Quit'.

Figure 10.2: Example of an Order Form

10.7 DIFFERENT TYPES OF FIELDS

An E-form has a structured and standardized set of related user input fields. Input fields allow users to fill data in a form. For user inputs, there are various types of input fields which are given as under-

- Text field
- Password field
- Check box
- Drop-down field
- Date pickers
- Radio buttons (to help user select one of a limited number of choices)
etc.

When we collect ‘Personal Information’ from the employees, we may use the above fields.

Personal Information	
Name	:
Father’s Name	:
Date of Birth	:
Address	:
Phone	:
E mail	:

While E-form designing, it is essential to select those type of fields which have the following features:

- It should have Minimum number of clicks required to complete the form.
- It should help the user to understand the next step once the previous one is completed.
- There should be a smaller number of optional fields.
- It should clearly give distinction between essential and optional fields. It is a practice to use asterisk (*) in red colour to indicate essential fields.

It is always better to split a long form into two or more steps to facilitate the user while filling the same. In this section, we will discuss Contact Field, Custom Field, Field Group and Progress Profile.

10.7.1 Contact Field

Contact fields are the most commonly used fields in E-forms, which give information about the contact details of the appicant such as name and address viz. street, city, country. Various fields are merged in contact fields to pre-populate with the information from a contact’s record. Pre-populate means an answer is pre-selected or has a pre-defined text or numerical value, when user uses a form.

10.7.2 Custom Field

Custom field helps a user to have new extra fields to fill in, if required. When creating a new field, the security settings just make the field visible to web form users. Thus, we can add a group or two or three fields side by side to fill the information that is important.

10.7.3 Field Group

Many a times, in forms, we need to fill a standard set of fields such as First Name, Last Name, Email Address and Pin Code. For this purpose, in web forms, we create pre-configured groups which allow the user to add the fields at once so that we do not have to recreate the groupings each time we design a form. An example of a Field Groups-

- Basic Contact Information: First Name, Last Name, Mobile number and Email Address
- Address Field Group: Address 1, Address 2, City, State or Province, Zip or Postal Code, and Country

10.7.4 Progress Profile

Progress Profile helps the user by guiding through a number of steps required to complete a form. It is done with the help of Progress Trackers (also called Progress Indicators) which display progress through a sequence by breaking it up into multiple logical and numbered steps. Thus, the user knows the sequence which is to be completed of a specified task while filling the form besides the current step being used i.e., the current location within the process of filling the form.

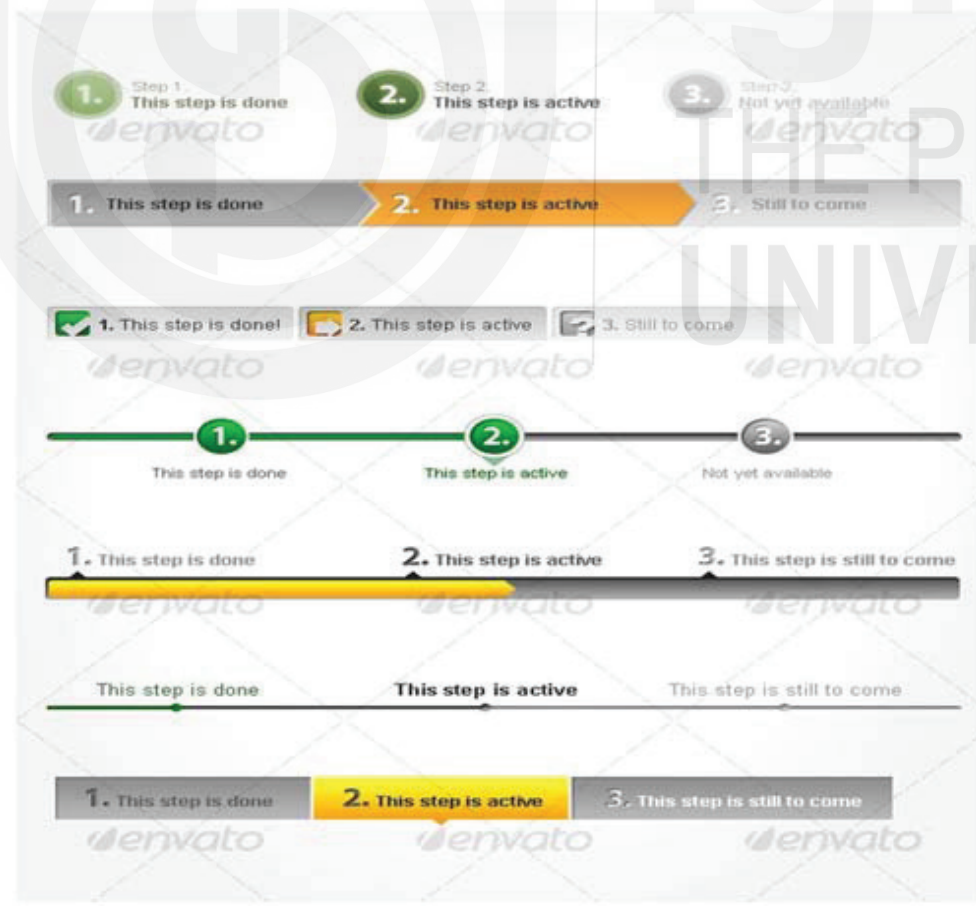


Figure 10.3: Progress Tracker

We often come across above Progress Trackers while filling e-forms.

Check Your Progress B

1. What do you understand by the Organizational Forms?

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2. Give examples of any four types of Application Forms.

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3. Write the various types of input fields.

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4. What do you understand by Progress Trackers?

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10.8 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF USING FORMS

As stated, a form helps the user to fill the data without much difficulty thus reducing a lot of clerical work as only the required information is submitted and collected briefly. A paper form is a document which has spaces to write while in an e form, we have to usually select a field to submit similar contents.

Advantages of Office Forms

1. Only the required, necessary and relevant information sought is submitted and received by the sender and receiver respectively.
2. Collection of information is quite convenient as the user submits the information according to the known format. There is no need to write down the matter as only brief and meaningful information is supplied. Thus, there is quick supply of information.

3. Reduction in clerical work and more output as there is standardized format to receive information.
4. Signed paper forms and as well as digitally signed E-forms, both are legally binding in case of any dispute at a future date.
5. Forms deliver more business as they are convenient to use for making enquiries thus providing better customer service.
6. Workflow is automated as the relevant E-forms are sent to the concerned employees in the organization directly for further processing. For example, leave applications are directly sent to HR, purchase inquiries to Sales Department., income tax forms to Accounts Department. etc.
7. E forms help in integrating the data with other business databases in the organization thus sharing, storage and retrieval of information is easy.
8. As E-forms have the facility of auto-population fields based on data earlier entered, there are less chances of errors and more accuracy in data entry.
9. E forms usage is a green way of information processing.

Disadvantages of Office Forms

1. The designing of paper forms along with its business office software, both requires great time and money.
2. A badly designed form leads to confusion in the mind of user.
3. Sometimes, the space left blank for filling information is not enough leading to receiving of insufficient information.

10.9 FORM CONTROL

As it is important to have an ideal quantity of forms at all times to facilitate smooth conduct of office operations, Form Control (Inventory Control) is important and is exercised on paper forms. It is necessary to hold control on optimal procurement, proper care and disposing off of all types of paper forms on regular basis. Under stocking and over stocking of forms leads to incurring unnecessary inventory costs. So, Office Manager judiciously needs to decide the optimum level of availability of each type of form all the time. An effective form control system is important due to following reasons:

- a) Administrative operations and workflow system carry on smoothly and uninterrupted due to regular supply of forms.
- b) It reduces unnecessary carrying costs of forms.
- c) Weeding out of obsolete forms is easy.
- d) A well designed and regular availability of required stock helps in enhancement of goodwill of an organization.

A careful study of Economic Order Quantity (EOQ) is to be exercised for a good system of form control. EOQ is an ideal order quantity of forms which an office should store at a time so as to reduce the cost of inventory at a given time. Further, as said, review of available stock levels of forms at regular intervals are important to dispose-off stock which is obsolete and undertake up-gradation, if required.

Check Your Progress C

1. Mention any two advantages of Office Forms.

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2. What is Form Control?

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3. What do you understand by EOQ?

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10.10 LET US SUM UP

In offices, forms are widely used for communicating recording and information. They are the basic tool of all office operations. A form is defined as ‘a format which contains structured and standardized document having blank spaces for entering information’. Office forms are a basic tool in the hands of administration as they inform the user to communicate only restricted information, specify space for writing particular information, help to generate multiple copies, facilitate to secure repetitive information and simplify office operations. Once the competent authority approves proposal to introduce a new form, its layout is prepared by the Office Manager.

The process of designing forms involves first clarifying the specific needs of the information to be collected, identifying the information required,

sequencing the information logically from the user's point of view (name followed by contact details and not vice versa) and designing the information that best meets your needs. Office forms may be for either internal use by the staff within the organization or for external use by customers/clients or other outside parties. Internal forms may be Accounting Forms, Application Forms or Memorandum Forms. Different External Contract Forms include forms for creditor and customer, order form and purchase order.

A e-form, also called web form has a structured and standardized set of related user input fields. Input fields allow users to fill in a form. For user inputs, there are various types of input fields like Text field, Password field, Check box, Drop-down field, Date pickers and Radio buttons. Contact fields are the most commonly used fields in forms and give information about the contact such as their name and address viz. street, city, country.

Many a times, in forms, we need to fill a standard set of fields such as First Name, Last Name, Email Address and Pin Code. For this purpose, in web forms, we create pre-configured groups which allow the user to add the fields at once so that we do not have to recreate the groupings each time we design a form. Progress trackers (or progress indicators) display progress through a sequence by breaking it up into multiple logical and numbered steps. They guide the user through a number of steps in order to complete a specified task. Only the required and relevant information sought is received and submitted by receiver and sender respectively. Some of the advantages of office forms are collection of information is quite convenient as the user submits the information according to the known format, reduction in clerical work and more output as there is standardized format to receive information etc. However, a badly designed form leads to confusion in the mind of user. Form Control, also called Inventory Control, means optimal procurement, care and disposition of paper forms, regardless of whether it takes place in a manufacturing process or an administrative process.

10.11 KEYWORDS

Contact fields: Contact fields are the most commonly used fields in forms and give information about the contact such as their name and address viz. street, city, country.

Custom field: Custom field helps a user to have new extra fields to fill in, if required.

Fixed data: It is that part of information which is essentially required in a pre-determined serial order. For fixed information, space allocated as per the amount of information required or necessary option given for clicking.

Form: A form is defined as 'a format which contains structured and standardized document having blank spaces for entering information'.

Form Control: Form Control means optimal procurement, care and disposition of paper forms, regardless of whether it takes place in a manufacturing process or an administrative process.

Organizational Forms: These forms are designed specifically to meet the needs of day-to-day working within the organization. They facilitate the management and staff to communicate and provide information speedily.

Progress Trackers: Progress trackers (or progress indicators) display progress through a sequence by breaking it up into multiple logical and numbered steps. They guide the user through a number of steps in order to complete a specified task.

Variable Information: The information required from the applicant of the form is termed as variable Information.

10.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress A

- 4. (a) True
- (b) False
- (c) True
- (d) False
- (e) True

10.13 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the meaning and significance of Office Forms.
2. “Effective designing of office forms is both science and art.” In the light of the statement, mention the points to be kept in mind while designing office forms.
3. What are the common types of forms used in a business organization?
4. Differentiate between Internal and External Office Forms giving examples of each type.
5. What is a Field Group? Explain with the help of an example.
6. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using forms in an organization.
7. What do you understand by an Electronic Form? Also mention its advantages.
8. What do you understand by Form Control?
9. Why filling on-line forms is popular now-a-days?

<p>Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.</p>

UNIT 11 OFFICE STATIONERY

Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Types of Stationery Used in Office
- 11.3 Importance of Managing Stationery
- 11.4 Selection of Stationery
- 11.5 Essential Requirement for a Good System of Dealing with Stationery
- 11.6 Purchasing Principles
- 11.7 Purchase Procedure
- 11.8 Standardization of Stationery
- 11.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 11.10 Keywords
- 11.11 Terminal Questions

11.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- enlist various stationery items generally used in an office;
- outline the importance of managing stationery;
- describe the factors usually taken into consideration while selecting office stationery in an office;
- mention a good system of dealing with stationery;
- develop effective stock control system;
- understand purchasing principles;
- devise plans regarding the purchase of stationery; and
- know about the need of standardization of stationery in an office.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Office stationery is used for day-to-day administrative work in every office, whether big or small. It includes the basic tools and utilities which one needs to perform the task of writing or any other office items such as note pads, papers, visiting cards etc.

Though due to era of Paperless Office and advent of smart phones/laptops, there is radical reduction in the use of various stationery items but many of them still have been used to improve efficiency and effectiveness in our

everyday work in office. In the digital world too, many of the stationery items viz. pen, pencil, markers, slip pad, paper clips, scissor, stapler etc. occupy the most deserved space on our office tables. Hence, proper control and management of stationery items is quite essential to ensure its availability at all times.

Though Covid 19 lockdown had declined the traditional demand for office stationery as every administrative work shifted to digital mode. There was no consumption of stationery as all the meetings and mail work completely shifted to online mode. It is important to note here that virtual office which had become a new reality has stayed even after lockdown and digital transformation is here to remain. Now, every office is not a place but has become a functional area to perform various administrative and management functions. In the present scenario, though we have been observing definitely a sharp decline in use of stationery but, however, its use will never go out of place in every office.

11.2 TYPES OF STATIONERY USED IN OFFICE

Every department in an office is using certain essential stationery materials like files, folders, planners, pens, pencils, sharpeners, paper, business card, post-it notes etc. However, the list of essential stationery items may vary according to specific business needs. For example, an educational institution essentially needs items like note books, drawing books, graph paper, geometry boxes, chart paper, glue, school bags, ruled papers, registers etc.

Here, it is important to understand the difference between Stationery and Office Supplies. Office supplies include any item which is required for smooth conduct of office work; like Computer, Furniture, and Office Machines viz. Photocopier/Paper Shredder/Mailing Machine/Printer etc. besides general stationery items. However, the stationery includes items which are required in day-to-day work and have generally low-cost budget as compared to office supplies. In other words, office supplies include stationery too but stationery does not include items like computer, furniture, printer etc.

According to the nature of organizational work, various types of stationery items are used in an office. Whether big or small, following type of stationery items are used in every type of organization:

- **Papers:** Though there is paperless era, but still paper is used to some extent in every office. An office needs paper generally for conducting correspondence and taking notes. Letterheads, photocopier paper, registers, printed invoices, notepads etc. are usually used in every business organization to carry out office work.
- **Writing tools:** In a workplace, pens, pencils, permanent markers, sketch pens, printer cartridges etc. are used almost by everyone in the office.
- **Files and Folders:** An office needs various types of files like box files,

lever arch files, etc. and folders viz. presentation holders, magazine holders, document binders etc. for record management,

- Diaries: Desk Diaries are often used to write important notes, prepare work schedules and remember important dates.
- Desk Calendar: It is available on every official's office table for quick reference.
- Calculators: Calculating machines are used in an office to perform speedy and accurate calculations.
- Other commonly needed stationery items include pen drives, scissors, stapler, paper weight, scale, glue, sticky slip, pen holder, paper tray, paper clip, awl pin, stamp pad, highlighter, white board marker, letter opener etc. for routine office work regularly.



Figure 11.1: Office Stationery

Due to affordability factor, many of the branded stationery items are also used by business organizations as corporate gifts.

It is the duty of the Office Manager to ensure not only the availability of right type of stationery in the office but also its adequate quantity to facilitate office staff to carry out their work effectively and efficiently.

11.3 IMPORTANCE OF MANAGING STATIONERY

Managing stationery appropriately is one of the key jobs of an Office Manager. Though it occupies a small amount of an organizational budget but still it is an important area of office management as there is always need to use resources optimally and control expenses.

Good and impressive stationery being used in an organization not only

enhances goodwill of the organization but also many a times proves to be economical in long run. It is necessary to continuously manage the supplies of stationery in an organization according to any alteration in the existing goals, size, nature, and work schedules etc. of the organization and expansion of office operations. Proper management of the stationery items helps in controlling stationery costs while defective management may lead to losses. Thus, Office Manager should not make a hasty decision while purchasing stationery items as it is extremely important to manage use of stationery in order to –

- Cut unnecessary cost
- Ensure safety from leakages, spoiling, theft, pilferage, moisture etc.,
- Ensure adequate and timely availability of stationery at all times
- Provide accurate type of stationery to carry out work
- Ensure always enough buffer stock
- Check on wastage of stationery items, if any.

While managing the use of stationery, following points should be kept in mind:

- Periodical review of existing items of stationery being used to find out their suitability i.e., eliminate the obsolete and useless stationery.
- Avoid misuse of stationery.
- Put efforts on improving the existing quality of stationery, if needed.
- Ascertain absolute necessary desired stationery items of particular quality and quantity.
- Reuse of old stationery wherever possible so as to reduce costs. In other words, optimum usage of stationery is essential. For example, using the paper on both sides while taking print outs.

An Office Manager should make a judicious decision and invest only on those stationery items which are absolutely necessary in the organization after a detailed study.

It is imperative that a well-defined system should exist in every organization to plan and execute the purchase of every new stationery item required by the departments. The main objectives which need to be achieved while introducing any additional item of stationery should be critically analyzed before taking decision to go ahead with the purchase process.

11.4 SELECTION OF STATIONERY

Selection of stationery involves choosing right type of stationery taking into account right quality and right quantity. The two important factors to be kept in mind are the nature of business i.e., type of work which needs to be

performed in an organization and its financial position.

Office Manager needs to be vigilant and gain enough knowledge about reputed suppliers of stationery and wherever possible, collect samples before taking decision to place bulk orders. As far as possible, branded products need to be selected as they prove to be economical in the long run. So, a lot of effort and time is to be invested in order to ensure good quality of stationery at economical prices. Extra care is required while choosing stationery for the office records which need to be preserved for a long period of time to avoid weathering effects. So, the paper, files, folders etc. should be of high quality to keep the information intact. Thus, it requires methodical selection and decision making.

A Store Officer is usually In-charge of Store Department and Store Keeper is responsible to issue stationery items to the office employees and maintain all relevant records relating to Store Department.

Following factors are usually taken into consideration while selecting office stationery in an office:

1. **Cost Effectiveness:** Office Manager needs to take care of the budget and put lot of efforts to ensure supply of stationery at a competitive price.
2. **Utility:** Accurate and appropriate supply of stationery facilitates office employees in performance of work effectively and efficiently.
3. **Durability:** Durability should not be compromised for the sake of economy in prices. The records, when to be used as documentary evidence at a later date, needs superior quality of stationery.
4. **Quality:** As far as possible, good and branded stationery should be used for office work as this enhances corporate image.

Check Your Progress A

1. Why is it important to manage stationery in an organization?

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2. While managing use of stationery, what points should be kept in mind?

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3. What factors are usually taken into consideration while selecting office stationery in an office?

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11.5 ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A GOOD SYSTEM OF DEALING WITH STATIONERY

As expenditure involved in procuring stationery involves lots of business money, it is important to devise an effective system of dealing with stationery items to ensure its uninterrupted supply in the organization. An effective system of dealing with stationery has the following benefits:

- a) It educates employees in the organization for optimum utilization of stationery items and avoids its wastage. In other words, there is need to encourage responsible usage of all stationery items.
- b) It discourages use of office stationery for personal use. Often memo pads, envelopes, pen, pencil, etc. may be used for personal work by employees.
- c) Lot of space and maintenance charges can be saved through an effective system of dealing stationery.
- d) A good system helps in prevention of deterioration, theft and pilferage of stationery and, thus, avoids wastage of stationery, if any.

A systematic plan regarding the issue of stationery items in an organization involves following steps:

1. Firstly, requisition of each type of stationery item stating clearly quantity required, is sent by the department through an indent form or indent book. Indent Book is also called Requisition Book. The requirement is usually counter-signed by department head.
2. Store Officer receives the requirement and after analyzing the same passes on instructions to Store Keeper to issue the specified stationery to the department concerned.
3. Store Keeper issues the stationery and maintains the record of every issue in Stock Registers or Stock Control Software. This is important to update the balance stock left on a particular date to ensure uninterrupted replenishment of stock.

Store Officer should be careful to maintain required stock levels at regular intervals. Requirement of current year is decided based on the usage of last few years and, accordingly, decisions regarding purchase of stationery are taken.

Stationery Control System

An efficient and effective stationery control system is significant to have optimal level of stock of stationery at all times and reducing costs. It helps to reduce unnecessary carrying costs of stationery and keep the business operations go on uninterrupted. Besides, latest stock information of stationery can also be accessed at any point of time.

For an ideal stationery control system, it is significant to review regularly the exact requirement of stationery required by different departments. Maintaining a proper stock level of stationery require consideration of following three important aspects –

- a) **Planning** of accurate stock of stationery required in a year based on the experience of past few years, as stated above. Thus, unnecessary expenses of holding excess stock levels can be minimized.
- b) **Regular restoration** of stationery supply to a former level to ensure smooth flow of work.
- c) **Follow up** means regular review of existing stock level of stationery so as to bring desired modifications in the stock for effective and efficient running of office work in the organization.

Specialized Automated Stock Control System helps in managing effective stock control of stationery in real time and generates stock utilization reports. Thus, every modern organization has an effective automated system of managing stationery so that chances of over-stocking and under-stocking are not there and ample quantity of stationery is always available in stores always.

11.6 PURCHASING PRINCIPLES

For cost effective and successful purchasing of stationery, it is important to follow certain essentials of purchasing principles which are discussed as below:

- a) **Principle of Right Quantity** is important so as to purchase and maintain continuous supply of stationery of right quantity. This is important to avoid any overstocking as this will block not only capital but also deteriorate quality of items. Under-stocking may result in non-availability of required item at the time of need and, thus, hamper flow of work and thus great loss to organizational efficiency.
- b) **Principle of Right Quality** ensures availability of stationery as per the required specifications to carry out office operations qualitatively. It does not mean purchasing expensive or costly items but the right and suitable items.
- c) **Principle of Right Time** i.e., taking necessary steps to purchase stationery items at the right time so that availability of the items could be ensured at all times. Re-order level for each type of item is to be calculated for timely purchase. Re-order level means stock level at which

a company needs to place an order to refill the stock used.

- d) **Principle of Right Price** means procuring the stationery items at the most competitive price after detailed market survey. For this, Office Manager must invite quotations and decide upon the best bidder.
- e) **Principle of Right Source** is essential to ensure that the supplier is reliable in all respects and must honor commitments as per the agreed terms and quotations.
- f) **Principle of Right Place** is one of the essential purchasing principles. According to this principle, vendor should be selected keeping in mind that transportation expenses and material handling costs are reduced to a great extent.

As it is actually impossible to imagine for an office to work without any stationery item and even in a paperless office, office supplies play a very important role to carry out office operations, a Storekeeper needs to have complete knowledge of the following four fundamental rules for better storage of stationery:

Careful Handling: Due to exposure of heat, moisture, etc., there may be deterioration in the quality of stationery items, storing. Hence, and handling them appropriately in proper room and cupboards, drawers, etc. is to be ensured.

Good Housekeeping: Clear and proper signage put on drawers, cupboard, almirah etc. in Store Room facilitates location of items without any delay.

Principle of Requisition and Use: It is very important that Store Keeper should issue stationery items after receipt of proper requisitions only to avoid its misuse. This also helps in saving of time and its optimal usage.

Principle of Effective Stock Control System: As referred, availability of adequate stock of stationery is to be ensured at all times in Store Department. To achieve this objective, proper stock control system has to be devised for smooth flow of work. So, it is necessary to hold review of stocks available regularly so that old and obsolete items are disposed off.

Managing Stationery

- Rule of Careful Handling
- Rule of Good Housekeeping
- Rule of Requisition and Use
- Rule of Effective Stock Control System

Figure 11.2: Rules for Better Storage of Stationery

Thus, a careful and systematic planning in handling and storage of office stationery is essential to maintain qualitative and quantitative supply of items at all times. In view of this, the following factors should be borne in mind while arranging stationery items in an office:

- To ascertain why a particular stationery item is required.
- Deciding precise specifications of all stationery items required once detailed market survey completed.
- Determination of quantity which is to be procured based on previous years' consumption.
- After that the most competitive price obtained and order placed on selected vendor. Cost, terms of payment, delivery period, discounts etc. are important parameters to be considered while placing an order.

Check Your Progress B

1. Mention the steps for a systematic system of dealing with stationery items in an organization.

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2. Enlist the six purchasing principles of stationery.

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3. While arranging stationery for an office, what factors should be borne in mind?

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11.7 PURCHASE PROCEDURE

Organizations prefer a centralized system for purchase of stationery items for their different departments. With this system, there is saving of money and time as bulk orders are placed and also there is better utilization of storage equipment. On the basis of the budget which has been assigned for purchase of office supplies, an order is placed for purchase of stationery items either

on-line or through an order letter by Purchase Department. While placing orders, there should be complete transparency of purchase procedure. On the website, there are various software available which give guidelines regarding preparation of budgets for purchase of stationery. There are also websites of various vendors who supply stationery and office supplies at competitive rates by on-line ordering.

Effective buying of stationery in an office goes a long way to manage expenses. There is an outlined procedure in every office regarding buying of stationery. Usually, the following methods are used for purchasing stationery in a large organization:

a) Inviting tenders

For bulk buying of stationery, a tender is sent by the organization to invite bids that are received within a finite period. The purpose of inviting tenders is to obtain the most competitive bid without any bias and do fair work.

The first step in the process of inviting tenders is to identify needs. Once needs identified, detailed specifications of required stationery are prepared and bids invited within a specific deadline by expressing interest in newspapers. In a meeting, the bids received are evaluated and the supplier who wins the tender enters into a contract with the organisation and becomes bound to provide the stationery items at the agreed price and other terms and conditions.

The procedure of inviting tenders is given below:

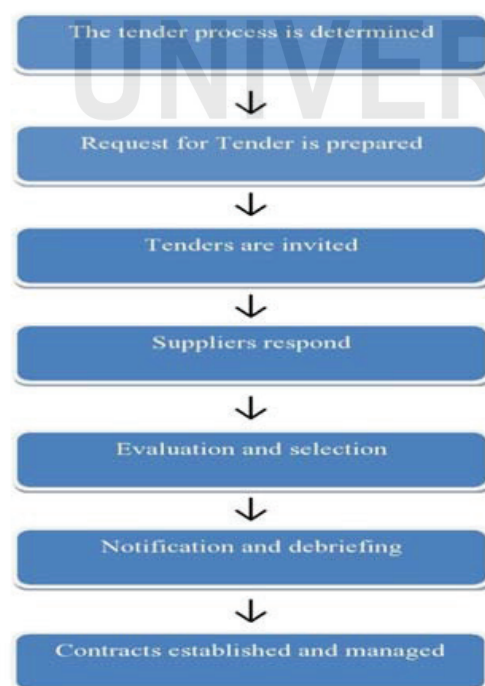


Figure 11.3: The Procedure of Inviting Tenders

E-tendering (electronic tendering) means sharing all information in electronic format. E-tendering has following advantages over tendering manually:

- Accurate and automatic acceptance and rejection of suppliers which fail to meet tender specification.
- Increased efficiency due to fast clarification of inquiries, if any.
- Less cost involved in expressing interest and tendering process as there is digital generation of various documents.
- Fair work and complete transparency in the tendering process

b) Quotations from the Suppliers

The buyer selects various suppliers of stationery after market survey and send them letters of enquiry which contains complete specifications of the requirement, quantity and time frame for supply of desired items. In response to enquiry letter, the suppliers submit quotations with complete terms and conditions of sale. The buyer selects the most competitive quotation and places order for buying the stationery. Before placing orders, it is a normal practice to prepare a comparative statement and the vendor who supplies at the most competitive price is selected for placing the order.

c) Buying Directly from Manufacturers

Many a times, large companies where there is bulk buying of branded stationery every year, the reputed manufacturers are contacted directly and place order placed for supply of the items.

11.8 STANDARDIZATION OF STATIONERY

Standardization of stationery means deciding uniform specifications of quality of office stationery items which are commonly needed by various departments. The standards once established need to be revised time to time according to changing requirements of the work and technology. Standardization of stationery is important due to following reasons:

- It leads to greater economy as we can go for bulk buying at competitive prices due to various trade discounts which are offered by companies.
- Standardization facilitates systematic record of issue and left out inventory due to consistent specifications of stationery.
- Monitoring on wastage of stationery can be done as uniform standards can be devised for its usage.

Initially, different items of different brands should be purchased to determine which brand is more suitable ultimately. Market trends need to be studied by Office Manager on continuous basis to update newly introduced stationery items for continuous revision of specifications of stationery items in the office.

11.9 LET US SUM UP

Stationery means any writing or official material used in day-to-day administrative work. As one of the basic tools, stationery occupies an important role to carry out day to day administrative work in every organization. Every office is using certain essential stationery materials like files, folders, planners, pens, pencils, sharpeners, paper, business card, post-it notes etc. However, the list of essential stationery items may vary according to specific business needs. Managing stationery appropriately is one of the key jobs of an Office Manager. Though it occupies a small amount of an organizational budget but still it is an important area of office management as there is always need to use resources optimally and control expenses. An Office Manager should make a judicious decision and invest only on those stationery items which are absolutely necessary in the organization after a detailed study.

Selection of stationery involves choosing right type of stationery taking into account right quality and right quantity. The two important factors to be kept in mind are the nature of business i.e., type of work which needs to be performed in an organization and its financial position. As expenditure involved in procuring stationery involves lots of business money, it is important to devise an effective system of dealing with stationery to ensure its uninterrupted supply in the organization.

For cost effective and successful purchasing of stationery, it is important to follow certain essentials of purchasing principles - Principle of Right Quantity, Principle of Right Quality, Principle of Right Time, Principle of Right Price, Principle of Right Source and Principle of Right Place.

Organizations prefer a centralized system for purchase of stationery items for their different departments. Methods used for purchasing stationery in a large organization include inviting tenders, inviting quotations or purchasing directly from manufacturers.

Standardization implies fixing the requirements or uniform specifications as to the quality of the items of the office stationery for various purposes. The standards have to be revised from time to time to come up with the changing requirements of the office and technology.

11.10 KEYWORDS

Principle of Right Quality: It ensures availability of stationery as per the required specifications to carry out office operations qualitatively. It does not mean purchasing expensive or costly items but the right and suitable items.

Principle of Right Price: Principle of Right Price means procuring the stationery items at the most competitive price after detailed market survey.

Standardization of Stationery: Standardization of stationery means deciding uniform specifications of quality of office stationery items which are commonly needed by various departments.

11.11 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Enlist different stationery items generally used in an office.
2. Is it important to manage use of stationery? If so, why?
3. Explain the various factors which should be taken into consideration while selecting office stationery in an office.
4. “It is essential to follow a system of dealing with stationery items in an organization.” Explain the various steps of requisition and issues of stationery.
5. Write about the rules regarding storage of stationery.
6. Explain various purchasing principles of stationery items.
7. What are various methods of purchasing stationery in an organization? Which method do you consider the best for buying bulk stationery for an organization?
8. What is meant by standardization of stationery? Why is it important?

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.

UNIT 12 MAILING PROCEDURES

Structure

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Meaning and Importance of Mail
- 12.3 Centralization of Mail Handling Work
- 12.4 Mail Room Equipment and Accessories
- 12.5 Postal Franking Machine
- 12.6 Mailing through Posts/ Couriers/ Emails
 - 12.6.1 Sending Mail through Posts
 - 12.6.2 Sending Mail through Couriers
 - 12.6.3 Sending Electronic Mails
- 12.7 Appending Files with Emails
- 12.8 Inward and Outward Mails
- 12.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 12.10 Keywords
- 12.11 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 12.12 Terminal Questions

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- define the term – mail;
- understand different types of mail received in an office;
- describe the importance of mail;
- handle centralization of mail handling work;
- describe the importance of various Mail Room Equipment and accessories;
- explain about use of Postal Franking Machine;
- know the procedure of appending Files with Emails; and
- describe the process of handling of Inward and outward mail.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

It is essential for all business houses to initiate and maintain contacts with their customers, government organizations, financial institutions, investors, employees etc. for their survival and growth. As written communication is

the most formal and reliable form of communication, e-mail, letters, memos, circulars, endorsements, reports etc. are written regularly to exchange information among business associates. Sending and receiving written communication takes the form of mail and handling of Mail is one of the important functions of an office. It is important that every Office Manager should have sound knowledge of the procedure of handling of mail which is to be followed in the organization. Efficient and effective handling of mail helps a company to boost its business and have better image of the organization. On the other hand, inefficient and ineffective mailing system may cause delay and loss of business.

During Covid 19 lockdown, digital technology has been a clear winner and it has become almost clear that physical way of dealing with mail is no more sustainable over the long run. With the shift to virtual reality, the companies have been using PCs coupled with internet connectivity to send and receive mails. Even before pre-pandemic, digital platforms were used for sending and receiving messages in an organization but the pandemic has accelerated it to an increasingly new level. Though we cannot do away with sending and receiving physical mails altogether, but its use has reduced considerably because of digital route being the shortest and convenient between a sender and receiver of mail.

12.2 MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF MAIL

Sending and receiving of written communication of various types in an organization is termed as Mail. It is an integral part of administrative work in every office. Each and every mail received in the organization should get due attention and attended to at the earliest opportunity. Efficient and effective handling of office mail is important for sustenance and growth of all business activities. Importance of Mail is imperative due to the following reasons:

- a) **Facilitates Communication:** With the help of mail, we can exchange ideas, opinions, views etc. between two or more parties.
- b) **Create and Maintain Relationship:** Mail is important for keeping in touch with customers, clients and stakeholders in the organization.
- c) **Permanent Record:** With mail, record of communication can be retained which can be used at a later date for any verification purposes, if required.
- d) **Serve as Sequence of Events:** It enables a business to maintain a proper relationship with correspondences made between two parties as they serve as a proper trail of events which helps in strengthening of business.
- e) **Brand Ambassador:** Sales promotion mail acts as a representative of the company to create corporate image.

In large organizations, Mailing Department is set up separately to handle

various mailing operations. However, in small and medium sized organizations, an Office Manager or a Professional Secretary is responsible to take care of handling mail.

12.3 CENTRALIZATION OF MAIL HANDLING WORK

Centralization of Mail Handling work means all the mailing functions are centralized at one place. Mailing Department takes care of handling of all types of mail in the organization i.e., incoming mail, outgoing mail and inter departmental mail. All the departments receive and send mail through Mailing Department. Centralization of Mail Handling has following benefits:

- It leads to specialization as Mail Handling Supervisor becomes expert in all mail handling operations. So, a systematic procedure can be evolved which leads to less chances of errors in the work.
- Functional departments are free from the job of handling of mail.
- Less chances of duplication of mail handling work.
- More efficiency and effectiveness in work due to centralized mail handling.
- Optimum utilization of mail room equipment.
- Centralized mail handling leads to standardization of mail handling procedures.
- However, Centralization of Mail handling also has certain disadvantages which are given below:
- As there is voluminous mail, it may delay in handling of mail, which sometimes results in loss of business.
- Sometimes, there may be confidential mail. In Centralized mail handling, it is difficult to maintain secrecy of information.

In decentralized mail handling work, each department in an organization assumes the responsibility of handling its own mail.

12.4 MAIL ROOM EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORIES

Various mechanical equipment is used to handle the incoming and outgoing mail efficiently and effectively. Use of various mechanical devices has following advantages:

- Saving of time.
- Greater accuracy in work
- Efficiency in work due to speeding up of various mailing operations
- Elimination of wastage.

- Less chances of misuse of postage stamps
- Reduction in monotony of mailing operations.

The following Mail Room Equipment and Accessories are commonly used in a Mail Room:

1. Letter Opening Machine

It operates manually or electrically at a great speed and can open 100 to 500 letters per minute. Letter Opening Machine has a rotary knife which shaves off a very thin slice of the edge of envelopes. While using the machine, one should be careful that the contents of the envelope are not damaged.



Figure 12.1: Letter Opening Machine

When the mail received is not voluminous, Letter Opener in the form of a knife is used to open incoming mail.



Figure 12.2: Letter Opener Knife

2. Numbering and Dating Machines

A Numbering & Dating Machine is used for stamping on the incoming mail. The next serial numbers and date automatically changes after every use with the help of self-inking stamp pad.



Figure 12.3: Numbering and Dating Machine

3. Folding and Inserting Machine

A Folding Machine is used to fold approx. 5,000 to 10,000 sheets per hour. With this machine, it is possible to fold and insert letters into an envelope. The machine has to be adjusted according to desired number of folds as per the size of envelope.



Figure 12.4: Folding and Inserting Machine

4. Sealing Machine

The work of sealing of mail can be performed very neatly and efficiently with the help of this machine. Sealing Machine facilitates automatically moistening the flaps of an envelope. Hand operated sealing machines can seal about 100 envelopes a minute while electrically operated ones can operate at a speed of 15000 envelopes in an hour.

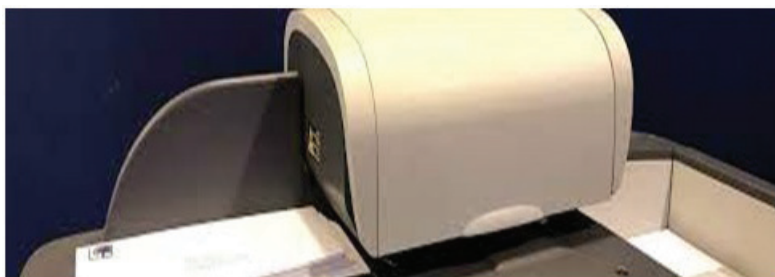


Figure 12.5: Sealing Machine

5. Mailing Scale

Mailing Scale helps to weigh outgoing mail and ascertain amount of postage stamps which are to be affixed on it.



Figure 12.6: Mailing Scale

6. Addressing Machine

It helps in printing of addresses on envelopes. The machine is used when mail is to be sent to those customers which are regular on mailing list. It can be operated manually or electrically. There is a ribbon to print addresses from already available embossed plates. Once the address plates are ready, it can be used any number of times.



Figure 12.7: Addressing Machine

As physical handling of incoming and outgoing mail is quite time consuming and monotonous job, the mail room equipment discussed above helps an Office Manager to overcome these limitations and handle mailing operations in the most effective and efficient manner.

12.5 POSTAL FRANKING MACHINE

Postal Franking Machine is a machine which is used to weigh and print postage stamps on the mail or parcels to be sent through Post Office. The machine is used only after obtaining license from the Department of Posts. We can add company's logo while designing the print of postage stamps. Sometimes, a customized advertising message in the form of slogan is also

used. Use of Franking Machine is preferred to handle bulk mail as franked mail is quite cheaper than affixing of postage stamps. Usually, franked mail has impressions of postage print which are of bright red colour.

Department of Posts has the facility of Franking Machine which can be managed remotely. It has a bar code with franked print and computerized facility of uploading credit.



Figure 12.8: Postal Franking Machine

Advantages:

- a) The use of Franking Machine saves time as it can help to frank 2000 letters and parcels if done manually and up to 12000 to 15000 if operated electrically.
- b) Record of use of postage stamps not to be maintained separately as every transaction is saved in the machine with complete details.
- c) Chances of pilferage of postal stamps reduced to a large extent.
- d) Neatness in work achieved.
- e) As we can include company's logo or any advertising slogan in the franked mail, it helps to brand the mail and enhances corporate image.
- f) The use of machine helps in avoiding the monotony which may be caused due to affixing of postage stamps in case of voluminous mail.
- g) Due to availability of the remotely managed Franking Machine, the amount can be replenished in the machine without visiting the Post Office personally.
- h) Franked mail is quite cheaper as compared to affixing postage stamps.

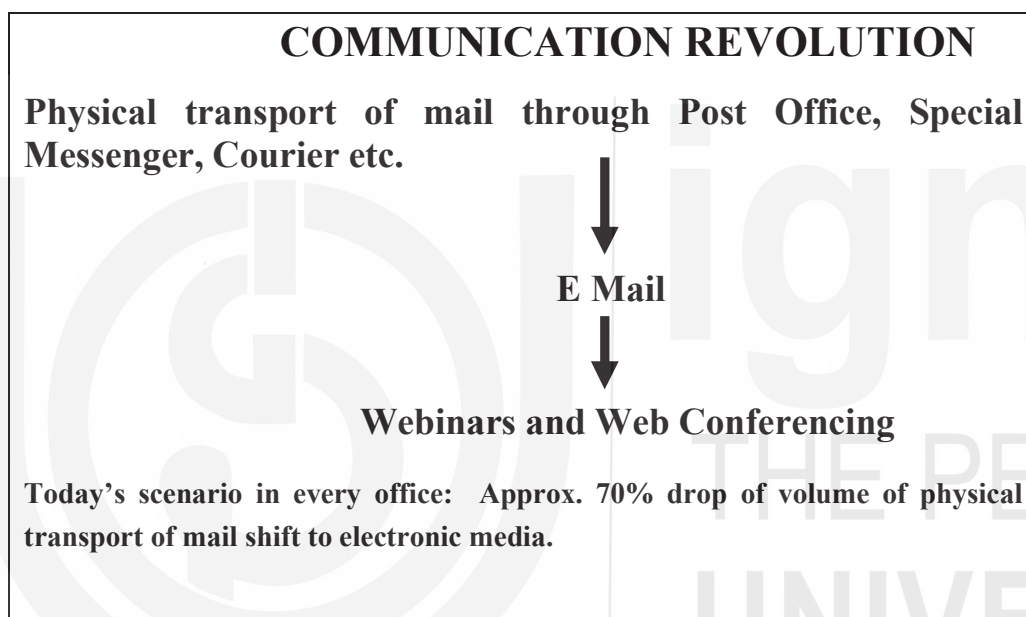
Disadvantages:

- a) Chances of errors in amount of printing postage in franked mail.
- b) The franked mail has to be deposited at the counter of Post Office for delivery.
- c) Large initial investment to be made for purchasing the machine.

- d) A good amount of money has to be paid to the post office in advance and recurring expenses to be made for purchase of ink.
- e) Regular maintenance and servicing expenses to be incurred to keep the machine in running condition at all times.

12.6 MAILING THROUGH POSTS/COURIERS/E MAILS

Mail can be delivered physically or with the help of an electronic medium. Post Office, Special Messenger and Courier Companies help physical delivery of mail from one place to another. E mail, an electronic form of sending mail is transmitted with the help of computers, tablets, smart phones or any other electronic device.



12.6.1 Sending Mail through Posts

Department of Posts in India mainly provides mail carriage services at affordable rates both at national and international levels. Besides mail carriage, the following services are also rendered by Department of Posts:

- Banking Services viz. Savings Bank Account, Time Deposits, Recurring Deposits, PPF Account, Monthly Income Scheme, Kisan Vikas Patra Scheme etc.
- Insurance Services viz. Postal Life Insurance, Rural Postal Life Insurance etc.
- Remittance Services viz. Money Order, Postal Order etc.
- Miscellaneous Postal Services like sale of postal and revenue stamps, pension and bill payments etc.

Though due to paperless office scenario, mails are normally sent digitally but still all types of organizations send often letters, parcels etc. with the help of a Post Office. Various IT enabled services are provided to the public by

Department of Posts, which are specialized in nature, fast and ensure documented delivery of mail. Some of the commonly used services offered regarding carriage of mail are discussed as follows:

Speed Post

It is an express time bound service for delivery of mail and other important stuff. With the help of Track and Trace facility for speed post, there is consistency and reliability in mail delivery and the compensation is paid for delay in delivery or loss of articles. For bulk delivery of mail by speed post, personalized and customized services viz. credit facilities, home collection, opening of speed post account, volume discounts etc. are provided by Department of Posts.



Figure 12.9: Speed Post Features

BNPL: It means 'Book Now Pay Later'. Department of Posts provides the facility of credit to customers who send bulk mail i.e., the mail being sent by speed post should not be less than Rs. 10,000/- in a month.

Certificate of Posting

The purpose of a Certificate of Posting is to provide a proof that letters and documents have actually been accepted for posting. This Certificate is date stamped and signed at the window of Post Office while handing over the letters and documents for delivery. However, it does not guarantee that items have reached its destination and addressee has actually received the posted items. In case of delay or loss of mailed stuff, sender cannot claim for any compensation.

Business Reply Post

In case an organization desires to receive a reply, without putting the burden of paying the charges of postage on its customers and clients, may append a self-addressed reply card which can be posted, without affixing any postage stamps. A pre-printed business reply postcard or envelope is appended while sending the mail. Special bar code is also used for routing. The basic purpose of Business Reply Post is to obtain response from prospective clients and customers.

To avail the service, an application in the specified performa to be submitted to Post Office and required license fee to be paid in advance.



Figure 12.10: Business Reply Post

Value Payable Post Parcel

This system facilitates the persons who do not wish to pay in advance for articles ordered. Against bonafide orders, parcel can be received by addressee only on payment of specified amount when delivered. The amount realized is then sent to the concerned trader. Thus, Post Office acts as an agency between the traders and the customers.

Post Box

Post Office provides the facility of Post Box which has a unique number. In other words, every post box or locker is allotted a number which is kept in Post Office. Whenever any mail is received bearing the allotted Post Box Number., it is kept in the relevant post box and locked.

The mail is collected on regular intervals by the authorized persons of renter on production of Delivery Ticket which is supplied by the Post Office. The renter can collect the mail from the Post Box during the business hours. Anyone can avail the facility by paying the specified rent to receive fully paid mail.

Post Bag

Under this system, a bag which has two duplicate keys is supplied by the renter to the Post Office. One key is available with the Post Office and the other with the renter. All mail is kept in the bag by the Post Office and locked. In other words, all postal articles which are addressed to the renter's office are kept by the Post Office in the Post bag. The locked post bag which contains the mail is handed over to the renter on production of Delivery Ticket which is supplied by the post authorities.

Blind Literature Packets

Department of Posts has given the facility to transmit the packets for the use of the blind only free of cost up to 7 kilograms.

Direct Post

Whenever there is need to advertise product and services by the commercial houses, direct mail which is accepted in bulk in designated offices is delivered to the prospective customers. This type of cost-effective mail is not posted in a letter box and should be presented at the window of the post office.

International Registered Post

It is one of the safest and cheapest mailing system for international post from India.

Logistics Post

It is very useful business service for sending parcels and large consignments across the nation and around the world. There is facility of collection to distribution of mail as per client's request. It also provides complete solution from order preparation to order fulfillment of client.

Express Mail Service (EMS) through Universal Postal Union

EMS is used to send documents and merchandise across the globe with the help of postal network. The service is provided by members of Universal Postal Union. The facility of online tracking of documents and merchandise being sent also available through EMS.

Like kiosks in banks, we will soon have kiosks in Post Offices to provide us various services, products and information about Department of Posts.

12.6.2 Sending Mail through Couriers

Courier post is customized door-to-door individualized delivery service. Mail is collected by a representative of Courier Company from the sender's office for personalized transmission at the destination. Courier posts are being increasingly used for transmission of mail and parcels at local, national or international level.

Due to features viz. high speed, security, tracking, acknowledgement and committed delivery schedules, courier services have witnessed a phenomenal growth in modern era to deliver mail and parcels. Courier services have become a very important means of delivering mail and parcels in a commercial organization due to following basic features:

- a) Delivery of any type of article of any value or weight i.e., perishable commodities, medicines etc.
- b) ETA (Expected Time of Arrival) and online tracking facilities are available (Normally stringent time schedules followed as per ETA).

- c) On request, proof of delivery can be obtained.
- d) Certainty of delivery of consignment as there is safe and reliable delivery.
- e) We can avail the facility of transit insurance, if desired.
- f) Logistic facilities offered by various companies like warehouse, special packing etc. as per client's needs.

The world's largest courier companies include DTDC, Bluedart, FedEx, DHL etc.

12.6.3 Sending Electronic Mails

E-mail (also called web mail) is the most popular and powerful means to transmit written messages through electronic media. E-mail as written means of communication, is preferred over other means as it has following important characteristics:

- Transmission of pictures, videos, demonstrations etc.
- Immediate delivery of mail with the click of a key.
- Possible to send and receive mail any time during the day.
- Automated record management of received and sent mails.
- Security of mail.
- Facility to send bulk mail.
- Economy in sending mail.
- Facility to send CC (Carbon Copy), BCC (Blind Carbon Copy), forward, etc.
- Supports green technology as paperless in nature.

Sometimes, there may be following threats which are associated with sending and receiving of E Mail:

- Crowded in box due to unwanted mails which may cause overloading of information.
- Threat of virus attack
- Hacking of e mail

However, with the various techniques, it is possible to overcome the e mail hazards. It is important that in-box of mail should be checked-in regularly.

Management of E Mail

It may be noted that now-a-days, there are various software/tools available in the market to manage e mail efficiently and effectively. They offer various E mail management strategies which may be used as per our specific requirement to achieve organizational goals. The basic objective of using these strategies is to keep our mail inbox quite organized at all times so that

we do not miss any important business mail. Some of the e mail management strategies which may be used are mentioned below:

- Creating folders for emails which are of similar types.
- Setting of automatic filters (by the name of product, client, project, location etc.) for important mails in inbox.
- Preparing template responses for certain e mails.
- Sorting mail in a designated folder whenever received.
- Flagging of emails which need to be responded urgently.
- Possibility to snooze any email or to allow any email to come back intermittently at the top of inbox
- Setting of signatures i.e., name, designation, department, address of organization, mobile number etc.

E Mail Etiquette

Depending on the position of receiver (i.e., superior, subordinate, colleague, customer or any other person), we need to take care of certain etiquette while communicating through an email.

The following etiquette are to be necessarily followed while sending an official email:

- Always write clear and concise subject.
- Address with an appropriate salutation.
- State clearly the idea behind sending the email (in body of the email). Each word should be chosen wisely as recipient is interested more in this part.
- Language of email should be polite.
- Use only standard abbreviations.
- In case of any attachment to be sent, do not forget to include the same.
- At the end, do write polite closing sentence along with name, designation and contact number of sender.
- Include carefully CC (Carbon Copy) and BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) while addressing email.

It is very important that all e mails received are checked regularly at intervals during the day and replied at the earliest opportunity.

Check Your Progress A

1. Fill up the following blanks with suitable words:

- a) of mail handling work means all the mailing functions are centralized at one place.

- b) Mail Room Equipment monotony of mailing operations.
 - c) A Numbering & Dating Machine is used for
 - d) is a machine which is used to weigh and print postage stamps on the mail or parcels to be sent through Post Office.
 - e) Mail can be delivered physically or with the help of a/an medium.
 - f) is very high-speed express service for letters and documents with time-bound delivery.
 - g) The basic purpose of Business Reply Post is to obtain
 - h) BNPL means
 - i) means facility of collection to distribution of mail as per client's request.
2. State whether each of the following statements are True or False.
- a) Each and every mail received in the organization should get due attention and should be attended to at the earliest opportunity.
 - b) Besides carriage of mail, various banking services are also rendered by Department of Posts.
 - c) Certificate of Posting guarantee that items have reached its destination and addressee has actually received the posted items.
 - d) Department of Post has given the facility to transmit the packets for the use of the blind only free of cost upto 7 kilograms.
 - e) Due to features viz. high speed, security, tracking, acknowledgement and committed delivery schedules, courier services have witnessed a phenomenal growth in modern era to deliver mail and parcels.
 - f) It is not necessary to take care of certain etiquettes while communicating through an email.

12.7 APPENDING FILES WITH E MAILS

Append means to add at the end. It is a common practice to attach already created files in computer while sending e mails. The series of steps required to be taken while appending a file are:

- Compose your mail.
- Write subject and, then, message in the body of e mail.
- Click the email attachment icon, for example “Attach,” “Attach Files” or “Attach a File,”
- Open a file browser window from where we have to select our files which need to be appended.

- Navigate to the file location which is to be appended from the available files.
- Click the required file.
- Put the email address of the person you want to send the attachment to in the To: field.
- Hit the 'Send' button.

Many a times, when a file is open, the program being used to open the file may write "protect the file" or mark it "as in use". If a file is protected, we get an error when attempting to append that file. To append a protected file, the program protecting the file must be closed first.

12.8 INWARD AND OUTWARD MAILS

In an office, Mail Supervisor or an Office Executive usually is responsible for mail handling work. In order to handle all incoming and outgoing mails efficiently and effectively, a well-organized strategy has to be devised so that office processes are carried out without any delay. While planning mail handling operations, all efforts have to be made to ascertain that -

- a) there is no carelessness at any stage of mail handling as every mail, whether incoming or outgoing, is important from business point of view.
- b) all mail room equipment and accessories are used optimally.
- c) agency for receiving incoming mail and sending outgoing mail is selected judiciously to avoid any last-minute hassles.
- d) all mail generated and received in the organization is properly recorded to trace any mail at a later date without any delay.

TYPES OF MAIL

In an organization, mail can be broadly of two types:

- (a) On the basis of Means of Transmission**, mail may be of following two types:
- **Paper (Physical) Mail:** Paper Mail is the mail which is received or sent with the help of an agency. Agency of receiving or sending mail may be Post Office, Courier, Messenger etc.
 - **Electronic Mail:** Electronic Mail, as discussed above, is received sent through digital means with the help of internet.

Hybrid Mail Technology

This can convert all inward/outward paper (physical) mail into digital mode and deliver the same to the receiver electronically. Hence, the receiver gets an email along with a link which contains the digital image of the paper mail being transmitted.

(b) **On the basis of Generation /Receipt of Mail**, mail may be of following type:

- **Inward (Incoming) Mail** - Written communication received by an organization in the form of letters, notices, circulars, inquiries etc. is inward mail.
- **Outward (Outgoing) Mail** - Any communication in written form sent outside an organization is termed as Outward Mail. It may also take the form of letters, notices, circulars, inquiries etc.
- **Inter-Departmental Mail** - Inter-Departmental Mail means exchange of written communication between employees of different departments in an organization i.e. written communication between an Accounts Manager and a Sales Manager.
- **Intra-Departmental Mail** - Exchange of written communication within the same department in an organization. e.g., the communication between Purchase Manager and a member of purchase team.

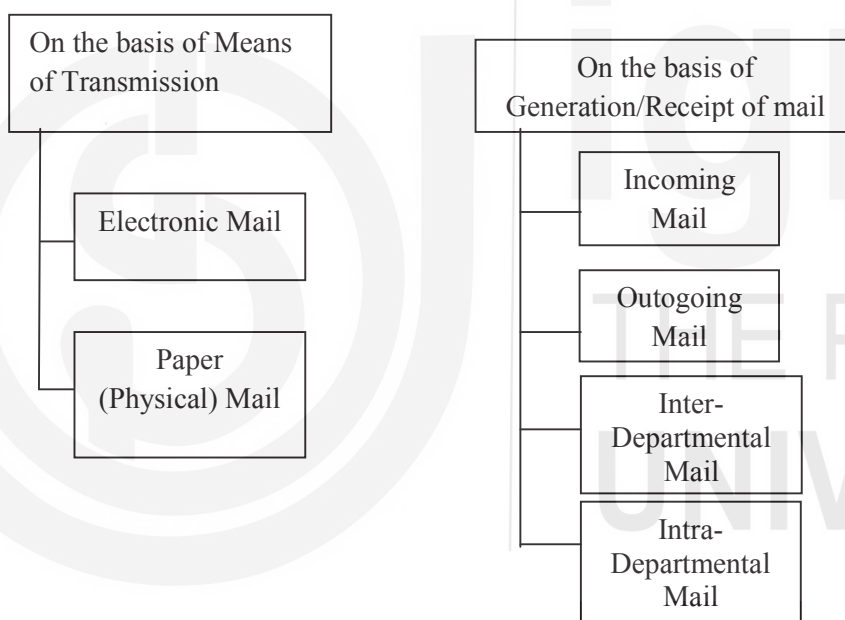


Figure 12.11: Classification of Mails

E Mails are generally addressed to the official concerned directly. However, in case, there is need to delegate tasks, the same is forwarded to the person concerned for necessary action. However, in case of paper mail, there is defined elaborate process involved in every organization for speedy disposal of mail. Various steps of handling inward and outward paper mail are discussed below.

Steps to Handle Inward Mail

Paper mail handling process varies from organization to organization and depends mainly on its size, nature and type of business being dealt with. The following steps are commonly followed if the mail is received physically:

1. Mail is Received

Mail is received in the office by an Office Assistant or Mailing Clerk. Sometimes, Front Office Assistant also receives all incoming mail and provides acknowledgement wherever required.

2. Received Mail is Sorted

Received mail is sorted so as to ensure that:

- a) if any personal or confidential mail is received, it could be sent to the concerned person unopened.
- b) official mail of urgent nature i.e. Court summons, time bound orders or any other important mail accords priority while opening and delivering.
- c) mail of routine nature viz. product literature, sales promotion letters, catalogue, etc. are given the last priority while opening.

There are pigeon hole racks, trays etc. with clearly marked names of department or numbers to facilitate sorting of mail.



Figure 12.12: Sorting of Mail

3. Opening of Official Mail

The next step is to open the official mail. In case of small organizations, as the mail received is limited, a paper knife is used for opening envelopes. Letter Opening Machine is used for opening bulk mail efficiently and neatly. While opening mail, it is important to ensure that:

- a) all the enclosures are appended with the covering letter.
- b) there is nothing left in the envelope before the same is disposed off.

4. Examining of Mail

The next step after opening the mail is examining of mail. Mail Handling Assistant examines briefly and quickly the contents of every letter/document to ensure that all enclosures mentioned in the letters are available.

5. Recording of Incoming Mail

After examining the contents, recording of incoming mail is done in Diary Register or Dak Register. The purpose of the register is to record briefly all the incoming mail of the organization and trace any mail, if required, at a later date. However, sales letters, product literature or any other advertising material is not recorded.

Incoming Mail Register

S.No./ (Diary No.)	Date and Time of Receiving	Reference No. or Letter No.	Sender's Name and Address	Subject	Concerned Deptt./Name of Official to whom the mail is being sent	Receiver's Initials

The above Register is normally maintained in Govt. deptts. and private offices have done away with the maintenance of the register as the same is quite time consuming.

6. Date Stamping of Mail

After recording of incoming mail, date stamping is done on every mail with the help of Automatic Numbering & Dating Machine. Generally, the following details are available on this type of stamp-

M/s Falcon New Technology, New Delhi Date of Receiving _____ Time of Receiving _____ Diary No. _____ Signature of Receiver _____
--

7. Mail is Segregated and Distributed

Once the date stamping is done, mail is properly segregated and distributed to the concerned departments or officials.

8. Follow-up Action

The last and the most important step is "Follow-up Action" on the mail received. So, all the efforts are to be made to take quick and necessary action as per the requirements. Any delay in sending replies means loss of business prospects and bad corporate image.

Steps to Handle Outward Mail

Once the paper mail is distributed to the concerned departments, the following process is usually followed in an office:

1. Preparation of Suitable Replies

Once the suitable replies to letters are prepared and signed by an authorized signatory, the outgoing mail is kept in 'Out Tray' in every department. Thus, the tray contains the mail which is ready for dispatch.

2. Collection of Outgoing Letters

A Multi-tasking Assistant or Office Assistant collects all the outgoing letters twice a day from the 'Out Tray'. It is the responsibility of Mailing Supervisor or Office Manager to get the mail collected from the departments timely so that it could be dispatched without any hindrance.

In case of any special instructions regarding dispatch of mail, Mailing Department or Dispatch Section deliver the same according to the instructions mentioned on the mail.

3. Recording in Mail Outward Register

Every mail to be sent is recorded in Mail Outward Register, also called Despatch Register. Details of the register are mentioned below:

Dispatch Register/Outward Mail Register

S.No./ Despatch No.	Date of dispatch	Reference No. of letter being sent	Name and brief Address of Receiver	Brief Subject	Mode of Delivery	Postage Stamps used		Remarks
						Rs.	P.	

Peon Book is used to record local Mail which is to be sent by a Special Messenger. It has following details:

Format of Peon Book

S.No.	Ref. No. & Date	Name & Address of Receiver	Brief Subject	Name and Designation of Messenger	Receiver's Signature along with date and time of receipt of Mail

4. Folding and Insertion of Mail

Once the recording of outward mail done, letters are properly folded according to the size of envelope and inserted in the envelopes. Folding and Inserting Machines are available to do this task efficiently in case bulk outward mail is to be handled every day.

5. Preparation of Envelopes – Addressing, Sealing and Stamping

The next step after folding of the letters is to put them into envelopes and

then write address on them. Careful and neat addressing with proper margins on envelope ensures secured delivery of paper mail. While addressing on envelopes, proper margin needs to be left at the top right corner for affixing or printing of postage stamps. Addressing Machine helps in addressing of bulk mail as the same ensures saving of time and printing correct addresses.

It is important to use always PIN Code (Postal Index Number Code) while addressing envelopes as the code helps in accurate and speedy delivery of mail being sent.

Once addressing of envelopes completed, we need to do sealing of envelopes. Envelopes which contain important and confidential documents are to be sealed very carefully. Book Post content like catalogue, advertising material, product literature etc. are usually not sealed while sending.

On the outward mail sent through post, postage stamps of suitable denominations need to be affixed or printed with the help of Franking Machine. For this, Weighing Scale is used and the correct amount of postage stamps calculated according to opted mode of delivery. Over-stamping and under-stamping are to be avoided at all costs.

Franking Machines are commonly used by offices for stamping the outgoing bulk mail.

6. Sending Mail for Delivery

Posting of Mail is the last step in the procedure of handling of outgoing paper mail. Mail which is to be sent by Speed Post is sent through Mail Assistant to the Post Office so to obtain proof of delivery. Peon Book is used to obtain acknowledgement of mail which is to be sent through special messenger. Mail to be sent through courier handed over to courier company's representatives as per the fixed time intervals.

Check Your Progress B

1. Differentiate between Inter-Departmental and Intra-Departmental Mail.

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2. Enlist the various steps of handling of paper incoming mail.

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3. Mention the various entries of a Dispatch Register?

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4. What do you understand by Hybrid Mail Technology?

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12.9 LET US SUM UP

Handling of Mail is one of the important functions of an office. It is important that every Office Manager should have sound knowledge of the procedure of handling of mail which is to be followed in the organization. Efficient and effective handling of mail helps a company to boost its business and have better image of the organization. In large organizations, Mailing Department is set up to handle various mailing operations. However, in small organizations, an Office Manager or a Professional Secretary is responsible to take care of handling mail. Centralization of Mail Handling work means all the mailing functions are centralized at one place. Mailing Department takes care of handling of all types of mail in the organization i.e. incoming mail, outgoing mail and inter departmental mail. Various mechanical equipment viz. Letter Opening Machine, Numbering and Dating Machines, Folding and Inserting Machine, Folding and Inserting Machine, Franking Machine etc. is used to handle the incoming and outgoing mail efficiently and effectively. Mail can be delivery physically or with the help of an electronic medium. Post Office, Special Messenger and Courier Companies help physical delivery of mail from one place to another. E mail, an electronic form of sending mail is sent with the help of computers, tablets, smart phones or any other electronic device.

Department of Posts in India mainly provides mail carriage services at affordable rates both at national and international levels. Courier post is customized door-to-door individualized delivery service. Mail is collected by a representative of Courier Company from the sender's office for personalized transmission at the destination. E-mail (also called web mail) is the most popular and powerful means to transmit written messages through electronic media. It is common practice to attach already created files in computer while sending e mails.

In an organization, mail can be broadly of two types. Firstly, on the basis of means of transmission i.e., Paper (Physical) Mail or Electronic Mail. Paper

Mail is the mail which is received or sent with the help of an agency. Agency of receiving or sending mail may be Post Office, Courier, Messenger etc. Electronic Mail, as discussed above, is sent with through digital means with the help of internet. Secondly, on the basis of generation/receipt of mail i.e. Inward (Incoming) Mail. Outward (Outgoing) Mail, Inter-Departmental Mail and Intra-Departmental Mail. E Mails are generally addressed to the official concerned directly. However, in case, there is need to delegate tasks, the same is forwarded to the person concerned for necessary action. However, in case of paper mail, there is defined elaborate process involved in every organization for speedy disposal of mail. Paper mail handling process varies from organization to organization and depends mainly on its size, nature and type of business being dealt with.

12.10 KEYWORDS

Centralization of Mail: Centralization of Mail Handling work means all the mailing functions are centralized at one place.

Inward (Incoming) Mail: It is a written communication received by an organization in the form of letters, notices, circulars, inquiries etc. is inward mail.

Postal Franking Machine: It is a machine which is used to weigh and print postage stamps on the mail or parcels to be sent through Post Office.

12.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress A

1.
 - a) Centralization
 - b) reduces
 - c) for stamping on the incoming mail.
 - d) Franking Machine
 - e) electronic
 - f) Speed Post
 - g) is to obtain response from prospective clients and customers.
 - h) Book Now Pay Later
 - i) Logistics Post
2.
 - a) True
 - b) True
 - c) False
 - d) True
 - e) True
 - f) False

12.12 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Explain briefly the importance of mail for a business organization.
2. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of Centralization of Mailing Services.
3. Why should we use Mail Room Equipment?
4. “Use of Franking Machine is preferred to stamp bulk mail”. In the light of the statement, mention the various advantages of using a Franking Machine.
5. Enumerate the various services rendered by Department of Posts.
6. Explain e mail management strategies which may be used for efficient management of mail.
7. Enlist the various steps required to be taken to append a file while sending an e mail.
8. “Tarun has to follow a series of steps to handle incoming paper mail.” Describe each step of handling incoming mail which is usually followed by him.

Note: These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.