



**INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH  
KRISHI BHAWAN : NEW DELHI**

F.No. 6(4)/2010-W.S.

Dated, the 19 Oct., 2010

To

1. All DDGs/ND, NAIP
2. All Directors/Project Directors of Institutes / PDs / NRCs and ZPDs.

Sub.: Records Management

Sir,

It has been observed that over the years there is a decline in adherence to the procedures prescribed for dealing with receipts and cases in our offices. This has led to delays and deterioration in quality standards of service. It is seen that files are opened without linking with previous file(s) on the subject and in the files put up for consideration of DG and sometimes even the AM, the issues are not comprehensively dealt with in the light of relevant instructions. This leads to avoidable back movement of file for proper examination.

In order to improve office efficiency, it is necessary to follow the secretarial best practices as enshrined in the manual of office procedure issued by the DoPT. Accordingly, it has been decided that:

- i. Henceforth the ICAR hqrs. as well as all the Institutes will handle files and office correspondence, from initiation to consignment to records, as per office procedure laid down in the Manual of Office Procedure (MOP) of DOPT (<http://www.darpg.nic.in>)
- ii. Carry out of campaign to consign to record all files as per required procedure, regarding which detailed instructions are being given in paras 102 to 115.

2. A very recurrent departure from the best practices as given in the MOP is the opening of new files on receipt of any PUC whatsoever, without trying to link it to previous files or papers and, in several cases, without even entering new file properly in the file register. Therefore, the following special arrangement is being put into place with immediate effect:

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- i. Whenever a new file is opened in the ICAR hqrs. or in any institute, the SO/US in the case of Hqrs. and the AAO/AO/SAO in the case of Institute will have to record a certificate on the file as follows:

*"This is to certify that there is no current file on the subject in the office, and that the new file has been duly entered in the file register".*

- ii. In case a part file is being opened, then:
  - (a) It has to be stated by the SO/US or AAO/AO/SAO, as the case may be, that part file is being opened because the main file is under submission;
  - (b) More importantly, the moment the main file is received back it should be merged with the main file; by renumbering the note and correspondence portion of the part file, so that there is continuity of numbering in the main file.
- iii. As per Chapter XV of the MOP the Head of Department (Director in the case of Institute and a designated DS/Director in the case of Hqrs.) is required to inspect office at least once a year. The heads of departments must carry out these inspections regularly, and during the inspections they must check the compliance of the instructions given above specifically, apart from compliance of the MOP, in all its aspects.

3. All other requirements required for proper maintenance of files are given in the MOP of the DOPT, which is available at the website named at (1) above.

4. Consigning files to record is not an unimportant activity. In fact, it is a most important activity, because while doing our work we are creating record of current history, and scholars in subsequent generations may be interested in looking at some of our actions and decisions for purposes of historical or sociological studies. It is also important because it removes non-current papers from offices to the record room, providing cleaner and more spacious working environment in the office, and reduces the risk of fire. Lastly, it is important because some of the record may be required subsequently, especially in relation to court cases, and unless the record is properly consigned to record, it would be impossible at all to trace old record when required.

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- 4.1 Therefore, with regard to consigning files to record as stated above, a special campaign is being carried out with the aim of bringing our recording up-to-date, within the current calendar year, i.e., by December 2010. For doing so, while instructions are available in the MOP (Chapter XII), the important aspects of these instructions are being specifically brought out in the instructions given below:
- 4.2 Each section shall maintain record of files opened during the calendar year in a file register as prescribed vide appendix 22 of the manual of office procedure. While opening a new file the Section Officer, or AAO in case of an Institute, will have to record a certificate on the first page as indicated in para 2(1)(i).
- 4.3 A part file may be opened if the main file on a subject is not likely to be available for some time and it is necessary to process a matter without waiting for its return. However, the, part file has to be, merged with the main file as soon as possible. Movement of files and other papers shall be entered in the file movement register prescribed vide appendix 23 of the manual of office procedure,
- 4.4 Files shall be recorded after action on the issues considered in the file has been completed. However, files of a purely ephemeral nature (such as casual leave records or circulars of temporary nature) containing papers of little reference or research value may be destroyed after one year without being formally recorded.
- 4.5 The first step in recording of files is their categorisation depending on importance and reference value. Therefore, in the beginning, categorisation of files may be done by ADG / Director / Deputy Secretary at the headquarters and Director / SAO in the institutes.
- 4.6 There are following three categories of recorded files.
- (i) *Category 'A' meaning 'keep and microfilm/ digitise'* – This category covers
    - (a) Files of historical importance such as those listed in part 'B' of Appendix 25 of manual of office procedure,

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(b) Files which have to be permanently preserved for administrative purposes (vide part 'A' of appendix 25 of manual of office procedure) and which have to be microfilmed / digitised because they contain:

- a document so precious that its original must be preserved intact and access to it in the original form must be restricted to the barest minimum ; or
- material likely to be required for frequent reference by different parties.

(ii) *Category 'B' meaning 'keep but do not microfilm'* - This category covers files which have to be permanently preserved for administrative purposes (vide part 'A' of appendix 25 of manual of office procedure) but do not warrant microfilming.

(iii) *Category 'C' meaning 'keep for specified period only'* - This category includes files of secondary importance and having reference value for limited period not exceeding 10 years, these are the files which have not fallen either in Category 'A' or 'B'.

4.7 Recording of files is to be done in the following manner :

To begin with the recording of old files may be done at the level of ADGs / Director / Deputy Secretary / Under Secretary / SAO / AO / AAO who may begin with say 10 files a day, and with time they may find it possible to screen more number of files per day. Once the back log is clear the recording may be done at the level of SO / AAO / Assistant.

4.8 Recording is to be done in the following manner :

(A) Action to be taken in the section

- (i) indicate the appropriate category of record and in the case of category 'C', also specify the retention period and the year of destruction on the file cover;

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- (ii) where necessary, revise the title of the file so that it describes adequately the contents at that stage;
- (iii) get the file indexed in the manner indicated in para 107, chapter XII of the manual of office procedure unless it is retained for less than 10 years from the date of closing;
- (iv) extract from the file, copies of important decisions, documents, etc. as are considered useful for future reference and add them to the standing guard file / precedent book;
- (v) remove from the file all superfluous papers such as reminder, acknowledgements, routine slips, working-sheets, rough drafts, surplus copies, etc. and destroy them;
- (vi) complete all references and, in particular, mark previous and later references on the subject on the file cover;
- (vii) pass on the file to the record clerk;

(B) Action to be taken in the record section

The record clerk shall take following action:

- (i) complete column 4 and 5 of the file register and correct the entry in column 2 where necessary;
- (ii) enter the file number in column 2 of the register for watching progress of recording (Appendix 24 of the manual of office procedure)
- (iii) write the word 'recorded' prominently in red ink across the entries in the file movement register;

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- (iv) indicate the year of review on the file cover in respect of category 'C' files;
- (v) prepare fresh covers, where necessary, with all the entries already made thereon;

4.9 (a) To ensure that the files are neither prematurely destroyed, nor kept for periods longer than necessary, instructions contained in record retention schedule should be followed.

(b) Recorded files should not be kept in the section for more than one year, after which they should be transferred to the departmental record room.

(c) The departmental record room should maintain a record review register as per appendix 30 of the manual of office procedure.

(d) A category 'C' file should be reviewed on the expiry of the specified retention period (reckoned with reference to the year of closing) and weeded out unless it is required to be retained for valid reasons.

(e) Category 'A' and category 'B' files should be reviewed on attaining the 25<sup>th</sup> year of their life in consultation with the National Archives of India.

(f) Beginning in January 2011, and each year thereafter, the departmental record room should send to the sections concerned, the files due for review in that year, in 4 lots in January, April, July, September.

(g) Files received in the section for review should be examined by the Section Officer concerned and those files which are no longer required should be marked for destruction. Other files should be marked for further retention. Files having a bearing on departmental / court proceedings should not be destroyed until required.

(h) After review the files should be returned to the departmental record room.

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(i)The departmental record officer should transfer category 'A' and 'B' files surviving the review undertaken at the 25<sup>th</sup> year of their life to the National Archives.

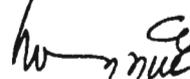
(j)Files marked for further retention should be restored in the record room after making the required entries in the record review register in the case of category 'C' files. Files marked for destruction should be destroyed by the departmental record officer.

5. Each institute should have a designated record room and a designated record clerk. A note issued by the National Archives of India on the minimum requirements of a record room is available on ICAR website and may be referred to. Expenditure on account of furnishing of record room and other activities connected with recording of files etc. may be met from sanctioned budget grant for office expenses.

6. While at first, consigning files for record may seem a difficult task to the Head of Department, or even a boring one, it is a task that has to be done, and it is a task which become easy as we go through it and get accustomed to the kind of records we are dealing with and the procedures that are prescribed for it. Each Director should keep a target of taking a decision on recording of files in respect of at least 20 files per day, and the Director would himself/herself notice that as the first two-three weeks pass, his/her own speed on disposing of such files would increase.

7. In view of the importance of records management the progress shall be reviewed in the monthly meeting of Senior Officers taken by the DG. Likewise Directors are requested to carry out monthly review at their level. It is proposed to review the progress made by the institutes in the meeting of Directors' Conference. In order to ensure proper maintenance of record compliance of these instructions may please be secured.

Yours faithfully,



(RAJIV MEHRISHI)

ADDL. SECRETARY, DARE & SECRETARY, ICAR

Copy to :

1. PSO to Secretary, DARE & DG, ICAR
2. PPS to AS, DARE & Secretary, ICAR
3. PS to AS & FA, DARE

4. SA to Chairman, ASRB
5. PD, DIPA
6. ADG (Cdn.)
7. All Directors / Deputy Secretaries / Secretary, ASRB / Under Secretaries at ICAR Hqrs.
8. DS(WS)
- ✓ 9. Shri Hans Raj, Information System Officer, (DIPA) KAB I for putting in the ICAR Web-Site.
10. All officers/sections at ICAR Hq./KAB I & II
11. Cdn. Section for giving Index Number
12. PD,DIPA, for compilation of circulars / instructions

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NOTE ON  
THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR A  
RECORDS ROOM

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NOTE ON  
THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR A RECORDS ROOM

**1. Introductory**

The Public Records Act, 1993 (No. 69 of 1993) has prescribed, under its sub-section (2) of Section 5, the setting up of the Records Rooms by every Records Creating Agency. Occasional surveys of the state of maintenance and preservation of records in various organisations have revealed that adequate measures to ensure proper upkeep and longevity of records are wanting.

1.1. The present note, therefore, marks out the basic requirements that are essential for safe housing of the semi-current and non-current records in the Records Rooms.

1.2. The salient features delineated below are primarily meant for those Records Rooms that are to be organised in the existing accommodation. While planning for the new office buildings providing for an adequately well equipped Records Room, the standards laid down by the Bureau of Indian Standards in "IS: 2663 -1989 Code of Practices for the Primary Elements in the Design of Buildings for Archives" may be followed.

**2. Records Room**

2.1. A separate Records Room/Stack Area is a vital necessity for all the Records Creating Agencies. A Records Room should, as far as possible, be located on the ground floor of a building. If its windows open into the space outside or in the courtyards in the interior, they should be fitted with metal grills and wire mesh nets. To avoid splashing of rain-water in the room, rain shades should be provided at all their openings. For reasons of safety of records and security, it is advisable to permit limited entry into such rooms.

2.2. The floor of a Records Room should be such as to permit easy movement of records carrying trolleys etc.

2.3. Where accommodation and design so permits, the stack-area, the record reference and the reception portions should be separate.

**3. Drainage**

3.1. While selecting the location of the Records Room, it may be ensured that no water pipes or drains pass near, above, or under the Records Room building. Further, in order to prevent any inflow of water in the stacks due to blockage of drains or accidental damage to water pipes in the building, its floor level should be raised a few centimeters above the general level of the other floors of the building.

3.2 To allow free movement of the trolleys, ramps should be provided near the entrance.

#### 4. Air-conditioning

4.1 Storage of records in an air-conditioned atmosphere is conducive to their longevity. Air-conditioning is, therefore, essential for Records Rooms. In existing buildings, which do not have central air-conditioning, use of package type air-conditioner or window type air-conditioner is recommended.

4.2 For effective air-conditioning, ventilation should be so planned as to permit minimum leakage of the conditioned atmosphere. While calculating conditioning load, bulk of shelving equipment, archival material, the number of persons sitting in the Records Room, the bulk of records moving in and out, and the lighting wattage should be taken into account.

4.3 Humidity and temperature in conditioned Records Room should be measured regularly. The ambient conditions for storage of records are (i) temperature 22°C-25°C and (ii) relative humidity 55 ± 5%.

4.4 In order to maintain proper humidity control in the conditioned area, it is necessary that permeation of dampness through the walls or floors does not take place. The floor should be laid waterproof and the walls should be coated with waterproof oil paint.

4.5 While planning for the air-conditioning for the Records Rooms, it may be ensured that the air-conditioning plant has to provide round the clock air-conditioning all through the year. Such running of plant could lead to occasional service breakdowns. Hence a provision for a stand by plant may also have to be made, lest such breakdowns create conditions which might lead to accelerated damage to records.

#### 5. Non-Conditioned Area

5.1 Keeping in view economy in resources, in many cases it may not be possible to get Records Room air-conditioned. In such a case step should be taken to provide proper circulation of air in the storage room by providing air-circulators, fans and exhaust fans to counteract the effect of high humidity, and prevent formation of pockets of stagnant air in the storage room. Use of chemicals, like silica gel or anhydrous calcium chloride in enameled or glazed earthen pots, help to reduce humidity in the room. Mechanical dehumidifiers are now available and during rains their use will help to check the deleterious influence of excessively humid climate.

5.2 Temperature in Records Room can be kept within reasonable range by choosing such rooms that are located in the interiors or have a verandah around them. During summer, the Records Room should be fitted with air-circulators, electric fans and exhaust fans for proper circulation of air, so that high temperature can be brought down. Care should be taken to see that direct sunlight does not fall on the records. This can be achieved by fitting either tinted glass-panes or heat resistant glass panes on the windows and by providing curtains.

## 6. Shelving

6.1 Shelving in a Records Room should be such which is simple in design, durable, easy to clean, offering maximum protection to records against fire and ensuring maximum facility and convenience for servicing of records.

6.2 Shelves should be fixed away from the walls on upright fixers and at equi-distance throughout the storage. Distance between successive shelf rows may be 0.7 m with a central gangway of 1.40 m or in accordance the requirement laid down in "IS: 2663-1989 Code of Practice for the Basic Elements in the Design of Buildings for Archives". Distance between successive rows of shelves may depend on dimensions of records/files and the manner of keeping record series on them. A perusal of the Indian standards referred to above will be helpful.

6.3 If steel shelving is provided in the Records Room, it should be painted rustproof. The paint should be stable and non-injurious to documents. Steel shelves may preferably be slotted for vertical free circulation of air. Where wooden shelves are provided, the wood should be protected against termite infestation. Sharp edges and corners in the shelves and supports which can result in physical damage to documents, should be rounded off.

## 7. Storage

7.1 Collections in Records Room differ in bulk, size and shape and commonly consist of bound volumes, loose sheets, files, manuscripts, maps, charts, plans & drawings etc. Shelving arrangement required for specific materials need designing according to the nature, shape and bulk of the material. While designing these shelves, it may be ensured that neither these nor materials kept on them touch either the walls, ceilings or floor. The distance from wall, ceiling and floor should be at least 31 cm.

7.2 The records should be stacked on the shelves with sufficient space in between, so as to enable free circulation of air and to prevent formation of pockets of high humidity. Unbound records may either be tied between 2 pieces of 5 ply boards or kept in carton boxes made of quality material.

7.3 For movement and proper servicing of records, stepladders or platform type ladders and trolleys fixed with swivel castors may be used.

7.4 For safeguarding the records against damage due to insect infestation, the Records Room should be sprayed with insecticide solutions beneath the shelves, behind the cabinets and also in corners etc. All cracks in the floor and walls should be filled up to deny any hiding place to pests. Use of spray guns or pressure guns or any other similar equipment can be made. However, only those chemicals should be sprayed whose effect on the durability and permanency of paper and other record components has been properly studied.

7.5 In a non-conditioned area, use of preservatives like naphthalene in the form of balls tied in meshed cloth or bricks kept on shelves helps to keep the records safe from insects. The insecticide formulations like Flit, Shell-tox and other related insecticides are effective.

7.6 Much damage to record is usually done by rodents. Whereas it is desirable to prevent their entry into the Records Room by using proper wire-mesh at the outlet drains, a few rat-traps should be kept handy for eliminating their menace in case of their entry in the Records Room. Neither eatables nor smoking, nor naked flame should be allowed in the storage area.

7.7 At the first sign of rise in humidity in the Records Room preventive action should be initiated. Also, advice of institutions like the National Archives of India, New Delhi, should invariably be sought in case any insect infestation or fungus growth is noticed or detected.

7.8 In spite of dust-proof buildings and air-conditioning, dust does find its way to the stored materials. Regular dusting operation in the storage area with the help of a vacuum cleaner is, therefore, desirable to remove dust from the stored material. The Records Room itself should also be kept absolutely clean. Staff engaged in dusting should be provided with dust respirators. A cloth bag with surgical lining that can be changed occasionally, works as a satisfactory respirator.

## **8. Lighting**

8.1 Good lighting with either natural or artificial light is necessary for every Records Room. Modern lighting practice is to provide defused lights of varying intensity for different rooms. Lighting can be improved by using paints that reflect light.

## **9. Fire Fighting Arrangements**

9.1 To protect records against any accidental fire, all electric wiring should be through conduit pipes and the main control switches of lights etc. installed in the storage area should be located outside the Records Room. As far as possible the Records Rooms should be made fire resistant. In big Records Rooms the storage space should be divided into separate fire resistant compartments. Additional automatic dampers should be installed in the centrally air-conditioned areas so that ducts could be immediately closed in case of fire, thereby preventing the spread of fire to other compartments. It is advisable to provide emergency exits, besides the main entry door to the Records Room to remove valuable archival material to safety, when necessary. Every Records Room should be fitted with a fire detection alarm system to detect any fire in the storage area. Use of naked light, heaters and smoking in the room should be prohibited. As a preventive measure against accidental fires, all light and power circuits should be switched off after office hours. Watch and Ward staff provided for this area may use torches, if necessary. Use of temporary lights, loose and ordinary flexible wire for fans, air-circulators and other electrical appliances for the repository should be avoided and instead 'Workshop Braded and Armoured' flexible wire should be used. Electrical appliances and fittings in the repository

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should be periodically checked for loose connections and defects rectified. In this connection, detailed instructions laid down in "IS: 1642 – 1989 Code of Practice for Fire Safety of Buildings (General) – Materials and details of Construction", and "IS: 11460 – 1985 Code of Practice for Fire Safety of Libraries and Archives Buildings (Reaffirmed 1991)" may be followed.

9.2 For combating fires, adequate equipment of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) type should be provided at suitable places in the Records Room for easy accessibility. Besides, water pipes and hoses should be installed at convenient points to fight any major conflagration.

9.3 All the equipments for either detecting of fire or combating of fire should be checked at regular intervals to ensure that they are in active operative state. Similarly, staff connected with the storage of records should be trained in fire fighting. A fire drill may be arranged at least once in two months to keep the trained staff alert.

9.4 Instructions regarding prevention of fire and fire fighting should be prominently displayed in the Records Room. Likewise telephone numbers of Fire Service Station should also be prominently displayed at a central place in the Records Room. It will help seeking quick aid of the expert fire fighting agencies, whenever exigencies so demand.

## 10. Care & Vigilance

10.1 To sum up, good house keeping, creation of hygienic conditions, proper breathing environment, combined with constant staff vigilance would facilitate maintenance of records in healthy state and for prolonging their life.

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under the Public Records Act, 1993?

- b. Whether the Departmental Records Officer and Staff have received training in Records Management?

3. **Records Retention Schedule:**

- a. Whether Records Retention Schedules for substantive and facilitative functions have been prepared?
- b. When was the Records Retention Schedule for substantive functions last revised?

4. **Appraisal of Non-current records:**

- a. Total number of non-current (more than 25 years old) records.
- b. When was the last appraisal of non-current records conducted?

5. **Transfer of Records:**

Whether all records marked for permanent retention after appraisal have been transferred to National Archives of India?

6. **Classified Records:**

- a. Whether an officer has been nominated as a Review Officer for classified records under Public Records Rule, 1997 (Rule 7)?
- b. When was the last review of classified records carried out?

7. **Manual of Office Procedure:**

- a. Whether instructions contained in *Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure* are being followed for office management in general and Records Management in particular?
- b. Which is the latest edition of *Manual of Office Procedure* being used?

8. **Recording of Files:**

- a. Whether Files are periodically recorded and regularly transferred to DRR?

9. **Records of Defunct Bodies:**

- a. Whether records of defunct bodies are available?
- b. If yes, what action has been initiated for their transfer to National Archives of India?