

POSTAL MANUAL VOLUME VII RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE

01. Stamps and seals :

- Every set is supplied with the following **stamp and seals**:
 - a) date stamp b) a name stamp c) a date -seal
 - d) 'Detained Late Fee Not Paid' stamp
- Each set of a Sorting Mail Office is further supplied with an **insurance seal**, enclosed in a box provided **with a lock and key**.
- The **insurance seal** must always remain in the possession of the **Head Sorting Assistant** who will be held responsible for its safe custody.
- With each **date-stamp** and seal is supplied a **type-box**, on the lid of which is painted the designation of the section or office and the number of the set to which the box belongs.
- **Type-boxes**, containing the type not in use and the **name stamps** are kept in the **Record office** .
- In addition, **special date seals** are supplied to the **registration and parcel departments**, when there are separate registration and Parcel Sorting Assistants, and to the mail departments of a Sorting Mail Office where the duties connected with the exchange of mails are performed by an official other than the Head Sorting Assistant.
- Also '**Detained Late Fee Not Paid**' stamp is supplied to mail offices/sections which deal with letter box clearance.

02. Portfolio and its contents :

- Each set of a section is supplied with a **portfolio**, provided with a **lock and key**, and bearing the **designation of the section** and the **number of the set** to which it belongs painted on it.
- In the **portfolio should be carried**: Acme covers Wax heater; Bundles of work papers; Due Mail Lists; Stamps & seals ; Memo of distribution of work Writing materials; Error book; Box of 'safety' matches Carbollic Soap Cake/Cakes; First Aid Box; Order Book; Duster; Book of service message forms; Ink pad with tin case Telegraph Message Code; Parrot-billed scissors; Type tweezer; Pen knife Brass files for papers; Poker Rubber stamping pad; Type Boxes; Type Stamps.
- The **portfolio** will always remain the **personal custody of the Head sorting Assistant/Mail Guard** who will be responsible for its safety, and to enable him to do so, the means for locking up or securing portfolio will be provided both at headquarters and outstation.

- In a **sealed bag should be carried** : Sweeping brush ; Labels for bags; Late fee notice board; Just twine; Ball twine; The seal holders and wooden blocks Sealing wax; Stamp brush; Covers, etc.
- Both at **Headquarters** and **outstations**, the portfolio, the **sack bag containing empty bags** (for the use of the section with mails or those to be returned to Record Office) and the above **sealed bag** should be dispatched to and received from the mail, record or Post Offices by the set of the section concerned with a remark on the mail list.
- These **entries should not**, however, be included in the **total struck** at the foot of the mail list.

03. Stationery :

- The **stationery rate list issued by the Superintendent** shows the quantity or number of the articles of stationery to be supplied to each set of every section and mail office in the Division.
- The **Head sorting Assistant** of a mail office, should at the commencement of each day's work, give out a stock sufficient **only** for the day's requirements, and the remainder of the articles should be kept under lock and key.
- The **Head sorting Assistant** of each set of the various sections attached to a Record Office will be supplied by the Record Officer, on the **1st of every month**, with a **month's supply of stationery**, for which he will give a receipt in the **stationery register**.
- He should keep this **stock in a spare bag** which, after he has given out the articles required for the set for one trip, should be closed and sealed with the date seal of the set and deposited for custody, under **lock and key**, by the Record Officers in the box provided for it at the Record Office.
- At the **end of the month**, the **unconsumed articles** (if any) should be detailed and deposited.

04. Preparation of daily report (M.S.83) :

- The **Head Sorting Assistant** is required to submit to the **Superintendent** through the **Record Officer**, a **daily report** in which the **irregularities** observed by him, or reported to him by the other Sorting Assistants of the set must be brought to notice.
- The daily report should be **written by the Head Sorting Assistant** from the **rough notebooks** of the set.
- In making each entry, the **Head Sorting Assistant** should write, in the appropriate column, first the name of the office/section of the official at fault or otherwise

concerned, and following this a brief statement of the occurrence, worded as concisely as possible, but furnishing all necessary particulars.

- If the **Head Sorting Assistant** is empowered to **apply for extra train accommodation**, he should forward with his daily report a carbon copy of the **requisition** made by him for such accommodation.
- The **entries in the daily report should be numbered** in one consecutive series for each report, and each entry neatly copied in a form of extract report, which should bear the same number as the entry to which it relates.
- In Mail Offices where **LSG Supervisors** have been sanctioned in addition to Head Sorting Assistants, each **LSG Supervisor will submit a daily note** in a prescribed form to the **Head Sorting Assistant** who will forward it to the **Divisional Office** through the **Record Officer** along with his daily report.
- On receipt of these **daily notes** in the Divisional Office, they will be carefully scrutinized and after taken necessary action filed along with the **daily report** of the Head Sorting Assistant.
- **Supervisor, Speed Post Centre** will also use the same format **MS (83)** for submitting his daily report to the **Manager, Speed Post**.

Important irregularities, etc., to be noted in the rough notebook and mentioned in daily report –

The following are the more **important irregularities** and occurrences which must be mentioned in the **daily report** –

- a) **absence** of carrier appointed to receive or deliver mails
- b) the **mails detained** in consequence being mentioned.
- c) receipt or dispatch of **special bags**;
- d) non receipt of a **due mail** bag or bags
- e) **opening of a bag** not intended for the section or office **by mistake**, or owing to its being mislabeled or damaged, or having a suspicious appearance.
- f) **receipt of a bag in damaged condition**, or insecurely fastened, or with the fastening or seal defective, or showing signs of tampering;
- g) **loss, over carriage, mis-sending** or mis-delivery of a bag, registered, bundle, press packet, registered article, or parcel mail article;
- h) **misconnection** of trains or mail buses or air service serving Head Post Office, selection grade or Class I Sub Post Office, the mails delayed or not received in consequence being mentioned;
- i) receipt or dispatch of a **due bag** not of the prescribed description;
- j) insubordination or **neglect of rules** on the part of staff;
- k) occasions on which **duties other than** those laid down in the **memorandum of distribution of work** are assigned to the sorting Assistant;

- l) **illness of an official** while on duty necessitating his leaving off work or quitting the van, or failure of an official to proceed on duty;
- m) **misuse of bags**;
- n) **disposal of damaged articles** or of an article containing anything injurious or offensive;
- o) receipt of (i) an unregistered article containing **anything rendering registration compulsory** or (ii) parcel mail article in **damaged condition**, or showing signs of tampering, or among articles of the letter mail posted in a letter box or received in sorting;
- p) **receipt of parcel** mail article without a No. slip, or **not bearing the impression of the date stamp** of the office of posting;
- q) **non preparation of a station or registered bundle** by a Post Office, Mail Office, or section or of an insured bundle by a Post Office, when the number of article for a Post Office exceeds the prescribed minimum;
- r) **all irregularities** in respect of registered articles, insured parcels or insured bags; s) **late receipt or dispatch** of mail from or to the local Post Office, the cause being stated (applies only to mail offices);
- t) **insufficient light in the van**, the cause being stated (applies only to sections).
- u) **non supply of a mail van**, or its removal during a trip by the Railway authorities or an accident occurring to the train and resulting in the detention of the mails, particulars of the mails delayed being given (applies only to sections) and

In every case where bag or article is received with signs of damage or where any bag, article, or due document is missing the **Head Sorting Assistant** should be guided generally by the instructions contained in Chapter 3 on investigations in the Postal Manual, Volume v and he should, where prescribed, attach the seal, twine, bag or list (as the case may be) to his daily report.

05. Mail abstract (M.42 for Transit Sections and M-43 for Mail Offices)

- The **mail abstract** is divided into **two parts**, viz., “**Mails**” and “**Bags**”.
- The former (or part headed “**Mails**”) shows, on the **left hand side** under the head “**Receipts**”, the number of **due mails** due to be received and the number actually received, and the number of **unusual mails** received, the **bags opened** by the section or office and **forward bags** being shown separately;
- And on the **right-hand side** under the head “**Dispatches**”, the number of **due mails** due to be dispatched and the number actually dispatched, the **bags closed** by the section or office and **forward bags** being shown separately.
- The **totals of forward** bags on both side should agree.
- The latter (or part headed “**Bags**”) shows, on the **left-hand side** under the head “**Receipts**”, the number of **empty bags** of each description due to be received from the UBO/DBO as the case may be,

- and on the **right-hand side** under the head “**Dispatches**” the **number of bags** of each description due to be dispatched with the due mails closed by the section or office and number actually dispatched, the number dispatched and the number returned to the record or sub-record office.
- The totals on both side should agree.
- **Particulars of the bags received and dispatched** (including insured bags and bags used as coverings for paid station and registered bundles) are given on the reverse of the form.
- The **mail abstract** also shows **in what cases due mails**, opened or closed by the section or office, or forward bags which are not accompanied by mail lists are received for dispatched **short or in excess** of the number due, with an explanation in each case of the **cause of the difference**, and in what cases the description of bags received or dispatched with due mails opened or closed by the section or office, or as surplus due bags, differs from the description due.
- The **information as to the number of due bags** to be received/opened by the set and **the number of empty canvas/drill bags** to be received with due bags opened is to be provided by the **Record Office**, before issue of mail abstract to the set.
- The **bags used for extra mail and transit bags**, paid station bundle and registered bundles, if any, addressed to or made up by a transit section or sorting mail office **should be accounted** for in the **mail abstract** in the same way as bags received and dispatched with **unusual mails**, except that a reference should be placed against the entry of the number in the body of the abstract under head “**Details of unusual bags**” and the remark “**including (number) extra bags**” preceded by a similar sign should be written in the blank space at the foot of the form.
- The **bags used for extra transit bags** addressed to or made up by a transit section or mail office **should be accounted** for in the mail abstract in the same way, except that the word “**extra**” should be substituted for the word “**unusual**” in the printed entry on the face of the form and in the heading on the reverse.
- In the case of sections, the **entries for the out and in trips** are shown separately in the mail abstract.

Completion of mail abstract :

- **Before arriving at the terminal station**, in the case of **section**, the Mail Guard/Mail Agent and **before closing work for the day** in a **mail office**, the **Head Sorting Assistant** should write up and complete the **mail abstract**.
- The **figures entered** in the **mail abstract** at the Record Office in the columns showing the number of mails and bags due to be received and dispatched should be reproduced in the columns headed “**Actually received**” and “**Actually dispatched**” after making the necessary additions and deductions if any owing to

excess of short receipts or dispatches as explained in the mail lists received the duplicates of those dispatched and the entries made during the trip at foot of the mail abstract.

- The **number of unusual mails** and bags received and dispatched should next be entered – the mails, from the lists received and duplicates of those dispatched, and the bags from the details on the **reverse of the abstract**.
- Both parts of the **abstract should then be totaled and balanced**; under the head “**Mails**” the total number of forward mails received and dispatched on each trip should agree; and under the head “**Bags**” the total number of bags received and dispatched to and from all sources should agree after adding to the dispatches the bags in hand, which should be entered opposite head “**returned to Record Office**”, but in the case of sections, care should be taken to verify the balance of bags in hand at the end of the out-trip by deducting from the receipts (including the supply received from the Record Office) the number of bags dispatched during the trips.
- Finally, the **mail list** should be stitched together in the order in which they were received or dispatched, and attached to the **mail abstract**.

06. Exchange of Mails :

- The **Due mail list of a section** shows the stations and that of mail office the hours at which **mails are received and dispatched** and also the **details of the mails** and in what cases they will be enclosed in **transit bags**.
- The **Mail Agent/Mail Guard** of a section or any other official specified for the purpose should, on the arrival of the train at station where mails are to be exchanged, **take delivery of the mails** for the set before giving out those for dispatch, and the Mail Agent/Mail Guard of a mail office should **first make over the bags for dispatch** and then take delivery of those of the office.
- **EXCEPTION** - At important stations where a large number of bags is exchanged, the Head of Circle may authorize the Mail Agent/Mail Guard of a section to deliver his mails before receiving those for onward transmission, in order to make room in the mail van.
- **The carrier** (Head Sorting Assistant, Mail Agent, Mail Peon, or other official appointed for the purpose) who **exchanges mails** with a section **is not permitted to enter the van** and whenever possible, the bags should be passed through the door / window of the van.
- **Mails exchanged** between a mail office and the local Post Office should be received and **delivered at the door of the mail office**, the carrier not being permitted to enter.
- The **Postmaster-General** may where considered necessary, **permit officials of mail office to enter the mail van** of a section to help in loading or unloading mails.

- The Head Sorting Assistant, Mail Agent or any other official of a mail office may **enter the mail van of a section for opening or closing cage TBs** prescribed in the due mail list.
- The **exchange of mail** should be done at **both the doorways** of main entrance and mail carriage portions of the sections whenever it is necessary and prescribed.
- In all cases of **exchange of mails**, where **no mail list is used**, the receipt should be taken for a **bag in receipt book** by the Post Office, mail office or section. In other cases, receipt should be taken by the **mail carrier** in the **Mail Peon's Book (Form MS-28)**.
- Every section must carry spare loose forms of **mail list to prepare the triplicate copy** of Mail list, prescribed in this rule, when necessary.
- In **large mail offices** and **sections** where it would be **impracticable** for the Head Sorting Assistant or other official to whom the duty is delegated by the Head of Circle to be performed on behalf of the Head Sorting Assistant to personally attend to the duties connected with the exchange of mails, part or whole of the work may under the orders of Head of Circle be performed by an official or officials specially appointed for the purpose or the Second Sorting Assistant, as the case may be, the duties so distributed being shown in the memo of distribution of work issued by the Superintendent.
- In such offices and sections, the official concerned and the **Head Sorting Assistant** must enter in the mail lists exchanged **from time to time every bag or article transferred from one official to another, the signature of the receiving officer being taken in the mail lists concerned.**

07. Cage T.B :

If the **Cage TB of a mail van** is addressed to the mail office of a terminal station by a mail office of originating station, the Head Sorting Assistant should enter the van and after examining the seal and fastening to ascertain whether they have been tampered with or not, should open the Cage TB and examine the seals, cords, labels and condition of the bags and check them with the mail list contained in it. The bag should then be taken delivery of. The key of the Cage T.B is to be forwarded in a sealed cover.

08. Disposal of mails addressed to a section or mail office

- The **transit bags** (if any) **addressed to a section** or mail office should be opened by the **Mail Guard or Mail Agent** himself, and the bags especially the **account bags** and **branch office bags** enclosed in them should be carefully examined and compared with the entries in the **mail lists**, which will be found inside the transit bags.

- In the case of a sorting mail office, the bag addressed to office itself, whether taken out of transit bags or received loose, should be dealt with first and disposed of in the following manner :
 - **Parcel bags** should be entered in the **mail abstract** and then transferred, under receipt (to be taken in the parcel abstract) to the **Parcel Sorting Assistant** ; and
 - **mail bags, branch office bags and packet bags** should be dealt with in the manner prescribed by the rules in the next chapter.
- The **forward bags** including sacks containing surplus unusual bags received by section, whether taken out of transit bags or received loose, **should be separated and disposed** of in the following manner :-
 - those to be **delivered at stations** within the beat of the section should be at once placed in the transit bags in which they are to be forwarded or if no transit bag is prescribed, they should be hung on separate hooks in the order of the stations at which they are to be delivered.
 - those to be **delivered at the terminal station** should be hung up together on the hooks at one end of the van; © sacks addressed to the Record office to which the section is attached should be placed in the bag provided for the purpose.
- The **forward bags** received by a sorting or transit mail office, whether taken out of transit bags or received loose, will remain in the custody of the **Head Sorting Assistant** until it is time to dispatch them and so long as the bags are not disposed of, they must be kept locked up in the **mail box**, the **key** of which must always be retained by the **Head Sorting Assistant** on his person.

09. Closing of transit bags

- When a **transit bag** is to be made up, the bags, due and unusual, to be dispatched in it should be checked with the entries in the mail list.
- The **condition of each bag**, the cord with which it is tied, the label and the seal, must be carefully examined by the **Head Sorting Assistant/Mail Guard/Mail Agent** and bags, with the mail list, placed by him in the transit bag, which should then be labeled and closed and sealed in the manner prescribed.
- **Transit bags** must always be **closed and sealed in the presence**, and under the direct supervision, of the **Head Sorting Assistant/Head Mail Guard/Mail Agent**.

10. Duties and responsibilities of the Mail Guard or Mail Agent

- The **duties of the Mail Guard or Mail Agent** comprise the work connected with the **receipt, custody, sorting and dispatch of articles** posted in the van or office and of closed mails.

- His **responsibility begins when articles are cleared from letter-boxes** or when closed mails are made over to him by a section, office or carrier, and continues until the bags are delivered or dispatched to destination.
- The Mail Guard or Mail Agent has nothing to do with the articles contained in the closed mails made over to him for disposal, but **transit bags addressed to the section or office are opened** and the bags contained in them are disposed of by him.
- The Mail Guard or Mail Agent is responsible that the articles and bags dealt with by him are carefully examined, properly treated and correctly disposed of, that the contents of transit bags
- And-in the case of a **transit mail office authorized to perform registration work** – of the registered bags and registered bundles closed by him are correct; that the bags and bundles are securely fastened and properly labelled and sealed; that torn or otherwise unserviceable bags are not used; that all irregularities and unusual occurrences connected with his work are promptly detected and brought to notice; and that his work -papers are completed and correctly prepared.

Attendance of set

- An **attendance register** will be kept in the **transit mail office** in which every **Mail Agent/or Mail Guard** of a set **must sign** his name and enter the **time of his attendance**.
- **At the appointed time**, the Mail Agent/Mail Guard of a section should be present at the Railway Station and should see that **all the other officials are present in due time** and that the work-papers and all other articles to be taken for use during the trip have been brought.
- He should see that **the staff are neatly dressed**, that they bring no personal luggage with them except their hand bags and bedding.
- In case when **any extra staff in addition** to the sanctioned strength is deputed to work with a set on account of receipt of heavy mails or any other unforeseen causes, **a separate memo will be issued to the Mail Agent/Mail Guard**, of the set in question as an authority, therefore.
- In case the extra staff so deputed is required to work with the set for more than one trip, the **memo should be filed with the daily report** of the last day for which the additional trip is required to work with it.
- In sets working in **running sections**, where **no attendance registers** are maintained, the official performing the particular duties should sign in the numerical order, against such designations **in the daily report** only.

Examination of van

- The **Mail Agent/Mail Guard** should **examine the interior of the van** and the fittings, glass-windows and lamps to see that nothing is damaged. He may be required to **pay the cost of any damage** to the internal fittings of the van caused by him, or not detected and brought to notice by him, on examination either at the commencement of the trip or as soon as possible after its occurrence, and before leaving the van at the termination of the trip.

Preliminary work

- The **Mail Agent/Mail Guard** of a section should **see that the hand bags/brief cases** and rolls of bedding of other official are **suitably placed** in the mail van away from the operational area and that the portfolio is opened and the articles taken out and arranged.
- The **Mail Agent/Mail Guard** of a section should next see that the articles including the work-papers, required for use and distributed to the other different officials, as the case may be, and arranged in their placed in the manner prescribed in the **memorandum of distribution of work**.
- The **Mail Agent/Mail Guard** should **arrange the empty bags** and other articles required for use in their proper places.
- The latter action should also be taken by a **Mail Agent/Mail Guard** preparatory to **commencing work** in the office/sections.
- If the **section commences its trip at a changing station**, the **Mail Agent/Mail Guard** should first **take delivery of the mails** from the official in charge of the relieved set, **examine the bags in the presence** and then sign the sectional mail list and the special mail list, if any, in token of having received the mails correctly.

Receipt and dispatch of mails.

- The rules prescribed for sorting mail offices regarding the receipt and dispatch of mails and the preparation of the forms connected therewith, in so far as they apply to a transit section or a transit mail office, must be strictly complied with by the **Mail Guard or Mail Agent**, as the case may be.
- In **transit sections**, the **exchange of mails should be done at both the doorways** of the mail van, i.e., at the main entrance and at the storage position of the van to avoid detention of mails.

Disposal of unregistered articles.

- **Unregistered articles posted in the van** or office or received from a **mail peon** should be sorted according to the instructions and dealt with in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the **Divisional Head**.

- Ordinarily, a **sorting mail bag** should be closed for each **office with which mails are exchanged**.

Registration of articles.

- With a few exceptions, every transit mail office is authorized to receive articles of the letter mail or registration, but not for insurance.
- The conditions under which articles may be registered and other information on the subject will be found in the Post Office Guide.

Preparation of mail for dispatch.-

- A **sufficient time before the arrival of the train at a station** where mails are to be given out by a transit section, or the hour fixed for the dispatch of a mail by a transit mail office, the bags for delivery or dispatch, as the case may be, should be sorted, those which are not be forwarded loose being sorting according to the transit bags in which they are to be enclosed; and the **Mail Guard or Mail Agent** must satisfy himself and the number of bags for delivery or dispatch is correct.

11. Final duties before quitting van or office:

- The **Mail Agent or Mail Guard** should **examine the fittings, lamps etc., of the van** to see that nothing has been damaged or lost.
- He **should replace the stamps, seals, books, etc., in the portfolio**, put the empty bags for return to the Record Office in the bag provided for the purpose and label and seal the letter bag.
- He **should then give out the mails to be delivered** and, if the trip is ended at a changing station, make over the mails, for the relieving set **to the office in charge together** with the **sectional mail list**.
- The **Mail Agent should examine and check the articles detailed** in the List of Articles and see that the articles of stationery, stamps, seals, books etc., are carefully put away; that the bag containing **empty bags** for return to the record office is labeled and sealed; that the **mail box** is properly secured and that the office room is swept and everything arranged in a tidy and orderly manner.
- He **should then lock the office room** and retain the key in his personal custody if there is no relieving Mail Agent, but if there is a succeeding set he will make over the deposit mails under entry in the mail list and hand over charge of the office to his reliever.

12. B Orders and TB orders:

- On receipt of a **B order from the Superintendent**, the **Record Officer** should have it neatly copied by one of the sorting assistants into the **guidance book** of each set concerned.
- The **T.B. orders** or the **Tour orders** received from the Superintendent should be filed separately in a **guard file**.
- The **Record Officer** should **explain the meaning of the order** to all Sorting Assistants including the Head Sorting Assistants or to the Mail Guard who should initial the order in evidence of having understood it.
- The **Record Officer** must see that all the B. Orders that concern a set – and only these - are copied into the **guidance book** of the set and he will be responsible for any omission or error in this respect.
- When **B. Orders or T.B. Orders become obsolete or are cancelled or amended**, the remark “**Cancelled (or amended) by B. Order or T.B.Order No. (No.) of 20...., See Page (No.)**” should be written, under the Record Officers signature in the case of B. Orders across the copies of the B. Orders in the guidance books of sets, a similar remark, omitting the page reference, being also written across the original orders in the guard file.
- The **order so cancelled** should be mentioned by the **record clerk** in his **daily report**.
- The **B. Orders and T.B. Orders** for **cases** year should be filed in a **guard book**, in the consecutive order of their Nos. (4.1) Spare copies of T.B. Orders will be supplied only to a Mail Office or section the staff of which have been exempted from Record Office attendance; provided, that the Mail Office is not located in the same building as the R.O. or has different working hours from the R.O.
- Even in that case, only one guard file of T.B. Orders should be mainlined for use of all the sets of mail office and the guard file should rotate from set to set.
- In the case of important and big mail offices, the **Head of the Circle** may order that a separate guard file of T.B. Orders should be maintained by each set of the mail office. (4.2) An index of T.B. Orders, should be maintained in the prescribed form with each guard file in Record Offices and Mail Offices concerned.
- B-Orders should not be copied in the **guidance book** of the mail offices located in the same building as the sub-record offices and having the same hours as those of the sub-record offices.