



HANDBOOK FOR OFFICE AUXILIARY/SENIOR OFFICE AUXILIARIES



**Ministry of Public Service and Administrative
Reforms**

May 2025

ABBREVIATIONS

ABVIPS	Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation
EHR	Electronic Human Resource
ETR	Electronic Time Recorder
LMS	Leave Management System
MPSAR	Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms
OA/SOAs	Office Auxiliary/Senior Office Auxiliaries
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health

Table of Contents

1.	SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK.....	5
2.	INTRODUCTION.....	5
3.	CONFIDENTIALITY	5
4.	CODE OF ETHICS FOR PUBLIC OFFICERS	6
5.	THE SCHEME OF SERVICE FOR THE POST OF OFFICE AUXILIARY/SENIOR OFFICE AUXILIARY PROVIDES AS FOLLOWS:	6
5.1	GENERAL GUIDING NOTES.....	7
6.	THE DUTIES SPECIFIED IN THE SCHEME OF SERVICE FOR THE POST OF HEAD OFFICE AUXILIARY ARE AS FOLLOWS:	9
7.	SALARY SCALE (PRB REPORT 2021).....	9
8.	APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE OF OFFICE AUXILIARY/ SENIOR OFFICE AUXILIARY	10
	MEDICAL EXAMINATION	10
9.	HOURS OF WORK.....	10
9.1	RECORD OF ATTENDANCE	11
10.	APPOINTMENT IN A SUBSTANTIVE CAPACITY AFTER COMPLETION OF ONE YEAR TEMPORARY PERIOD.....	11
11.	CONFIRMATION IN THE SERVICE	11
12.	OVERTIME	12
13.	ELIGIBILITY FOR INCREMENT	12
14.	PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL – MAIN FEATURES	13
15.	DISCIPLINE.....	13
16.	MOLESTING PUBLIC OFFICERS	13
17.	CAREER PATH	14
18.	TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.....	14
19.	GENERAL CONDITIONS OF SERVICE	15
A.	LEAVE - GENERAL CONDITIONS	15
B.	ELIGIBILITY FOR ANNUAL LEAVE ON COMPLETION OF 12 MONTHS OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE	16
C.	ELIGIBILITY FOR CASUAL LEAVE ON APPOINTMENT IN A SUBSTANTIVE CAPACITY	16

D.	SICK LEAVE – GENERAL CONDITIONS	17
E.	ELIGIBILITY FOR SICK LEAVE ON COMPLETION OF 12 MONTHS CONTINUOUS SERVICE	17
F.	ELIGIBILITY FOR SICK LEAVE ON APPOINTMENT IN A SUBSTANTIVE CAPACITY.....	18
G.	MATERNITY LEAVE.....	18
H.	VACATION LEAVE – GENERAL CONDITIONS	19
I.	PASSAGE BENEFITS.....	20
J.	UNIFORMS, UNIFORM ALLOWANCE AND PROTECTIVE CLOTHING/EQUIPMENT	21
20.	ALLOWANCES	22
21.	RETIREMENT IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE	23
22.	OCCUPATIONAL, SAFETY AND HEALTH GUIDELINES.....	23
	<i>APPENDIX</i>	28
	EXTRACT FROM CODE OF ETHICS FOR PUBLIC OFFICERS.....	28
	<i>REFERENCES</i>	34

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook aims to provide practical information to officers of the Office Auxiliary Cadre regarding the rules, regulations, and conditions of service applicable to them.

2. INTRODUCTION

Officers of the Office Auxiliary Cadre are appointed under delegated powers from the Public Service Commission, by the Secretary for Public Service who is the Responsible Officer for this Cadre.

The Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms (MPSAR) acknowledges their valuable contribution to the smooth functioning of Ministries/Departments. They are the first among others to reach office in the morning to ensure that the office is open on time, the premises are clean and safe and they are also the last ones to leave in the afternoon after all verifications have been completed.

Furthermore, MPSAR is committed to providing the Cadre with all facilities and empowering them with the appropriate knowledge and competencies to enable them to perform their duties efficiently.

Hence, this set of guidelines has been designed so that they have prompt access to all relevant information that would enable them to not only adopt the right attitude and behaviour, but also to help them to frame their career path.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY

The attention of officers of the Office Auxiliary Cadre is drawn to the provisions of the Official Secrets Act relating to confidentiality during their tenure of office but also after their employment in the Public Service and to the serious consequences which may follow any breach of these provisions.

They should sign a declaration form to that effect.

4. CODE OF ETHICS FOR PUBLIC OFFICERS

The Code of Ethics for Public Officers sets out the standards of correct conduct expected of Public Officers. It emphasizes the importance of a responsible, responsive and caring Public Service and is intended to promote effective administration and responsible behaviour. Among others, the key standards of behaviour are listed hereunder:

- (i) values and principles;
- (ii) good practices during a pre-election period;
- (iii) political impartiality;
- (iv) conflict of interest;
- (v) outside employment;
- (vi) disclosure of information; and
- (vii) acceptance of gifts and other benefits.

The relevant extract of the Code of Ethics for Public Officers is at **Appendix**.

5. THE SCHEME OF SERVICE FOR THE POST OF OFFICE AUXILIARY/SENIOR OFFICE AUXILIARY PROVIDES AS FOLLOWS:

The duties specified in the scheme of service for the post of Office Auxiliary/Senior Office Auxiliary are:

- (i) To assist the Head Office Auxiliary in the performance of his duties;
- (ii) To plan, organise, supervise and control the work of employees under his responsibility where no Head Office Auxiliary is posted and to report to his immediate supervisor any problem or difficulty noted;
- (iii) To collect keys and deposit same from/to Police Station/Police Post;
- (iv) To open and close offices;
- (v) To run official errands, including the dispatch of correspondence, forms and materials and the distribution of files, documents and faxes;

- (vi) To usher in/guide visitors and maintain the physical environment at a good standard;
- (vii) To clean premises and to maintain the physical environment at a good standard;
- (viii) To ensure that all switches/lights are turned off before leaving office;
- (ix) To operate a telephone switchboard/PABX console, as and when required;
- (x) To operate office equipment such as photocopy and fax machines;
- (xi) To attend to calls;
- (xii) To be in attendance at the reception counter of a Ministry/Department, as and when required;
- (xiii) To assist in the arrangement of furniture and equipment within office premises;
- (xiv) To perform simple binding duties; and
- (xv) To perform such other duties directly related to the main duties listed above or related to the delivery of the output and results expected from the Office Auxiliary/Senior Office Auxiliary in the roles ascribed to him.

The scheme of service and appellation may be amended/reviewed as and when required after all procedures have been duly followed.

5.1 GENERAL GUIDING NOTES

In order to provide a high level of service, Office Auxiliary/Senior Office Auxiliaries should pay particular attention to the following:

- (i) Plan, organise, supervise and control the work of employees:**
 - a) work should be distributed fairly and equitably;
 - b) colleagues should be treated with respect; and
 - c) teamwork and a good team spirit should prevail.

(ii) Open and close offices:

- a) punctuality and regularity in attendance are of utmost importance;
- b) the immediate supervisor should be informed of unforeseen absences promptly so that appropriate arrangements be made;
- c) since OA/SOAs have the responsibility to open offices, they should ensure the safekeeping of the keys at the designated places;
- d) while closing offices, they should carry out checks on whether any officer is still in office before closing; and
- e) they should also ensure that all switches/lights are turned off before leaving office.

(iii) Run official errands, including dispatch of correspondence and movement of files:

- a) for confidentiality purposes, a briefcase or sealed envelope should be used for the distribution of files/documents;
- b) official documents should be handled with due care to prevent any damage or loss;
- c) any loss of documents/files should be reported immediately to the immediate supervisor and the officer in charge of the Registry; and
- d) files removed from trays of scheduled officers should be brought to the Registry unless otherwise directed by the Registry.

(iv) Usher/guide visitors:

- a) proper records should be kept for all visitors if required;
- b) visitors should be directed to relevant offices by indicating the level and room number of the office; and
- c) visitors should be addressed with courtesy.

(v) Attendance at the reception counter, to operate a telephone switchboard/PABX console and to attend to calls:

- a) eating should be avoided at the reception counter;
- b) paper baskets should be emptied daily;
- c) there should be no gossiping at the reception counter;

- d) to address their correspondents politely and direct the call to the relevant officer; and
- e) an updated directory with names of scheduled officers and telephone numbers should be used.

6. THE DUTIES SPECIFIED IN THE SCHEME OF SERVICE FOR THE POST OF HEAD OFFICE AUXILIARY ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- (i) To plan, organise, supervise and control the work of Office Auxiliary/Senior Office Auxiliary and employees working under his responsibility;
- (ii) To provide training and guidance to subordinate staff;
- (iii) To ensure the timely dispatch of correspondence and documents;
- (iv) To report to his immediate superior any problem or difficulty noted and advise on remedial action, where appropriate;
- (v) To ensure that the physical environment of office premises is maintained at a good standard;
- (vi) To usher in/guide visitors and attend to calls, as and when required;
- (vii) To perform the duties of Office Auxiliary/Senior Office Auxiliary, as and when required; and
- (viii) To perform such other duties directly related to the main duties listed above or related to the delivery of the output and results expected from the Head Office Auxiliary in the roles ascribed to him.

7. SALARY SCALE (PRB REPORT 2021)

- (i) **The Salary Scale for the post of Office Auxiliary/Senior Office Auxiliary (PRB 2021)** is Rs 14725 x 250 - 15225 x 260 - 17825 x 275 - 18925 x 300 - 19525 x 325 - 21475 x 375 - 22225 x 400 - 23425 x 525 – 25525.

OA/SOAs who have reached the top salary in their scale will be granted one increment beyond the top salary of the scale in the Master Salary Scale. For example, if he/she reached top salary on

01 January 2023, i.e. Rs 25525, they will be granted one additional increment on 01 January 2024 bringing their salary to Rs 26050; and

- (ii) **The salary scale for the post of Head Office Auxiliary is 19225 x 300 - 19525 x 325 - 21475 x 375 - 22225 x 400 - 23425 x 525 - 26050 x 675 - 27400 x 825 - 28225.**

8. APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE OF OFFICE AUXILIARY/SENIOR OFFICE AUXILIARY

- (i) The appointment will be in a temporary capacity for a period of one year as from the date of assumption of duty;
- (ii) the initial salary will be Rs 14725 or the officer will retain the salary of the substantive post, as appropriate;
- (iii) the officer is not eligible for an increment unless already holds a substantive appointment; and
- (iv) the work, conduct and attendance of the officer will be continuously monitored.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION

OA/SOA will be required to undergo a medical examination and if found medically unfit, the temporary appointment will be terminated immediately.

9. HOURS OF WORK

For Ministries/Departments operating on a:

- a) five-day week basis (Monday to Friday): 08.00 hrs to 16.30 hrs (half hour for lunch); and
- b) six-day week basis (Monday to Friday): 07.00 hrs to 15.15 hrs (one hour for lunch)
(Saturday): 07.00 hrs to 10.45 hrs

Hours of work may vary depending on the operational needs of Ministries/Departments and officers of the Office Auxiliary Cadre should complete a total of 40 hours per week.

9.1 RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

- (i) Time of arrival and departure will be recorded on the Electronic Time Recorder (ETR); and
- (ii) In the absence of an ETR, a Manual Attendance Register will be used and the exact time of arrival and departure should be recorded on the same day.

10. APPOINTMENT IN A SUBSTANTIVE CAPACITY AFTER COMPLETION OF ONE YEAR TEMPORARY PERIOD

As and when vacancies occur and subject to being favourably reported upon on work, conduct and attendance:

- (i) OA/SOAs will be appointed after twelve months' probationary period; and
- (ii) If already confirmed, they will be appointed in a substantive capacity.

11. CONFIRMATION IN THE SERVICE

OA/SOAs will be confirmed after completion of the probationary period subject to being:

- (i) found medically fit; and

- (ii) favourably reported upon on work, conduct and attendance.

12. OVERTIME

- (i) Officers of the Office Auxiliary Cadre may be required to work outside normal working hours;
- (ii) a claim for payment of overtime should be duly filled in and submitted to the HR section for processing; and
- (iii) the rates for payment of overtime are presently as follows:

Period	Hourly Rate
Between 06 00 hrs and 23 00 hrs on weekdays	1.5 times the hourly rate
Between 23 00 hrs and 06 00 hrs on weekdays	twice hourly rate
On Sundays or Public Holidays and officially declared cyclone days/ national disasters	twice hourly rate

Hourly rate is calculated on the following basis:

$$\frac{\text{Annual salary for the financial year}}{52 \times 40}$$

13. ELIGIBILITY FOR INCREMENT

- (i) The first incremental date for OA/SOAs will be the date of **confirmation** and thereafter, the incremental date will be 1st January; and
- (ii) the annual increment is based on overall performance and has to be earned, i.e. the increment is not payable automatically.

14. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL – MAIN FEATURES

- (i) A performance appraisal exercise will be carried out by the immediate supervisor, who is generally the Head Office Auxiliary;
- (ii) Annual Increment should be earned and is based on overall performance; and
- (iii) Performance will be continually monitored.

15. DISCIPLINE

- (i) Officers of the Office Auxiliary Cadre are subject to the laws, rules and regulations governing the Public Service and to the Public Service Commission Regulations; and
- (ii) In case of misconduct, disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the provisions of the Public Service Commission Regulations.

16. MOLESTING PUBLIC OFFICERS

According to the Public Officers' Protection Act, any person who, by force or violence, resists, opposes, molests, hinders or obstructs a :

- (i) public officer in the performance of his duty;
- (ii) person lawfully engaged, authorised or employed in the performance of a public duty; or
- (iii) person lawfully acting in aid or assistance of the public officer or person mentioned in paragraphs (i) and (ii), shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 100,000 rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years.

17. CAREER PATH

- (i) OA/SOAs are eligible for promotion as Head Office Auxiliary, based on experience and merit, subject to being favourably reported upon and if reckoning at least five years' service in a substantive capacity in the Office Auxiliary Cadre.
- (ii) They may apply for other posts advertised in the Public Service, Parastatal Bodies and Local Authorities, subject to being duly qualified. For example, the posts of:
 - a. Receptionist/Telephone Operator;
 - b. Driver;
 - c. ICT Laboratory Auxiliary; and
 - d. Environmental Laboratory Auxiliary.

18. TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- (i) Tailor-made training programmes are designed by the MPSAR in collaboration with the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation (ABVIPSII) and are dispensed by the Institute;
- (ii) On joining the grade, OA/SOAs are provided with a 3-day induction course to assist them in the performance of their duties. The induction course will include topics such as:
 - a) The Roles and Responsibilities of Office Auxiliary/Senior Office Auxiliaries;
 - b) Team Building and Motivation;
 - c) Customer Care: Understanding the Importance of Customers as the most valuable asset in Service Delivery;

- d) Conditions of Service;
- e) Government Machinery and Public Institutions;
- f) Gender Equality Concept;
- g) Image Management and Personal Grooming; and
- h) Ethics and Good Governance.

(iii) Furthermore, additional training opportunities, as listed below, will be dispensed to enhance knowledge and competencies:

- a) Tea Making;
- b) Communication Skills;
- c) Customer Care; and
- d) Occupational Safety and Health.

(iv) Professional Development Programme

A three-day Professional Development Programme covering modules such as “Teamwork, Performance Management, Managing Team Performance, Code of Conduct and Ethics, Log-in MauPass and Electronic Human Resources Management System (EHR) including Leave Management System (LMS)” is offered to officers of the Office Auxiliary Cadre.

Training programmes will be regularly updated to meet the requirements of the day.

19. GENERAL CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

A. LEAVE - GENERAL CONDITIONS

- (i) Except for sick leave, leave is granted subject to the exigencies of the service and should be applied in advance;
- (ii) Before proceeding on leave, it should be ensured that leave has been approved;

- (iii) On resumption of duty after absence due to unforeseen circumstances, it is the responsibility of the OA/SOA to submit his application for leave promptly;
- (iv) OA/SOAs who absent themselves from duty without permission or who, without reasonable excuse fail to resume duty in time, will be considered as being absent without authorisation and on no pay;
- (v) OA/SOAs who intend to spend their leave abroad should inform in writing their Supervising Officer accordingly and give the address at which they may be contacted;
- (vi) An OA/SOA will not be eligible for annual leave with pay during his first year of service; and
- (vii) Application for leave (i.e. annual leave, casual leave, sick leave and vacation leave) should be made through the LMS of the EHR System via MauPass, wherever the system is fully operational. Necessary training will be given to officers to assist OA/SOAs on how to apply for leave on the System.

B. ELIGIBILITY FOR ANNUAL LEAVE ON COMPLETION OF 12 MONTHS OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE

- (i) For a five-day week basis operation - 14 working days on full pay in a calendar year; and
- (ii) For a six-day week basis operation - 16 working days on full pay in a calendar year.

C. ELIGIBILITY FOR CASUAL LEAVE ON APPOINTMENT IN A SUBSTANTIVE CAPACITY

- (i) 11 working days on full pay in a calendar year which may be taken locally or overseas; and
- (ii) Upon exhaustion of the 11 days casual leave, OA/SOAs may be, subject to exigencies of service, granted up to 5 days leave against their vacation leave balance.

D. SICK LEAVE – GENERAL CONDITIONS

- (i) Sick leave will be granted to eligible officers on the following grounds:
 - a) when sick and need to recuperate; and
 - b) to attend medical appointments and routine health checks.
- (ii) Subject to eligibility, absence from duty on grounds of illness will, as a general rule, be considered as sick leave and will be granted by Supervising Officers;
- (iii) OA/SOAs who absent themselves from duty on grounds of illness should inform their immediate supervisor, as far as practicable, on the same day. They should, on resumption of duty, apply for leave, stating the nature of their illness;
- (iv) Where the period of absence exceeds three consecutive working days, OA/SOAs should submit a medical certificate showing the date of its issue, the nature of the illness, the quantum of sick leave recommended and the name of the medical practitioner. Such certificates should reach their Supervising Officers not later than the fifth working day of absence, failing which they may be considered as being absent without authorisation and on no pay;
- (v) Where malingering is suspected, an OA/SOA may be required by his Supervising Officer to submit a medical certificate for any absence on grounds of illness, even if that absence is less than four working days; and
- (vi) Where a Supervising Officer considers that the sick leave record of an OA/SOA is unsatisfactory, he will arrange for him to be examined by a Medical Board to determine his fitness for further service.

E. ELIGIBILITY FOR SICK LEAVE ON COMPLETION OF 12 MONTHS CONTINUOUS SERVICE

Officers are eligible for twelve working days on full pay in a calendar year.

F. ELIGIBILITY FOR SICK LEAVE ON APPOINTMENT IN A SUBSTANTIVE CAPACITY

- (i) **21** working days on full pay in a calendar year;
- (ii) All leave not taken at the end of the year will be accumulated up to a bank maximum of **110** working days; and
- (iii) Unutilised sick leave up to a maximum of 16 days will be refunded subject to having 110 days in the bank.

G. MATERNITY LEAVE

- (i) Sixteen weeks' maternity leave on full pay is granted irrespective of the number of confinements and in the case of a stillborn child, on the production of a medical certificate;
- (ii) For pre-natal treatment - either earned sick/casual/annual or vacation leave may be taken;
- (iii) Prior to childbirth - up to a maximum of eight weeks of maternity leave, out of the 16 weeks maternity leave entitlement, may be taken;
- (iv) In case birth is given to twins or more in one confinement - may be granted 6 weeks' special leave in addition to their maternity leave entitlement; and
- (v) Subject to exigencies of service, within a period of 12 months following the expiry of maternity leave, officers may be granted in addition to any vacation leave:

EITHER

a maximum of 9 months' leave without pay

OR

six months' leave without pay followed by six months' leave on half pay computed based on half the working time per day on half pay, that is, half of the monthly salary.

H. VACATION LEAVE – GENERAL CONDITIONS

- (i) A vacation leave roster will be circulated at the beginning of the year and the proposed period of leave should be indicated after consultation with the immediate supervisor; and
- (ii) Officers will earn vacation leave as from the date of appointment in a substantive capacity as follows:

ENTITLEMENTS OF VACATION LEAVE

LENGTH OF SERVICE (IN YEARS)	LEAVE EARNING RATE PER ANNUM (IN DAYS)	MAXIMUM LEAVE THAT CAN BE ACCUMULATED (IN DAYS)
Up to 5	25	105
5+ to 10	30	140
10+ to 15	35	175
Over 15	35	210

- (i) Vacation Leave may be used for convalescence purposes at the end of an approved medical leave;
- (ii) Vacation Leave may be taken for a minimum of 7 consecutive days at any one time, except where it is granted as casual leave when it can be taken at a stretch or on and off, subject to a maximum of five working days annually; and
- (iii) Application should be made well in advance on the LMS of the EHR System via MauPass, wherever the System is fully operational. Where the EHR System is not operational, a predesigned form will be available in the HR Section and should be used to submit applications.

I. PASSAGE BENEFITS

- (i) On reckoning at least five years' service and holding a substantive appointment, officers will earn passage benefits at the rate of 5% of the gross salaries annually; and
- (ii) They are allowed to make use of accumulated passage benefits:
 - a. for own travel purposes and for the immediate members of their families, namely spouse, children, brother, sister, parents, father-in-law, mother-in-law; and
 - b. to cover expenditures made during travel other than for own air tickets;

or

They may cash wholly or in part the balance of accumulated passage benefit:

- a. for personal medical treatment or for immediate family members, namely spouse, brother, sister, mother, mother-in-law, father, father-in-law and children irrespective of their age, either locally or abroad; and
- b. for the purpose of renovation/construction of own primary residence.

Officers are allowed to cash up to 90% of their accumulated passage benefits for any other purpose other than travel.

Application for passage benefits should be made on the appropriate form available in the HR Section and should be submitted for processing with all required documents.

J. UNIFORMS, UNIFORM ALLOWANCE AND PROTECTIVE CLOTHING/EQUIPMENT

OA/SOAs are eligible for uniform allowance under Category 1 since the nature of the duties warrants a means of:

- (i) identification/authority;
- (ii) The quantum of uniform allowance is adjusted every year; and
- (iii) Presently the items for uniform are as follows:

ITEMS OF UNIFORMS	PRESENT ENTITLEMENT
Trousers	2
Shirts	3
Skirts	2
Dresses	2
Shoes	2 pairs yearly
Cardigans	2 every two years

- (iv) Prior to payment being effected, an undertaking should be signed, extract of which reads as follows:

“I undertake to wear the uniforms while on duty failing which I may render myself liable to disciplinary action as specified at paragraph 3.6.5 of the Human Resource Management Manual.”

- (i) OA/SOAs are also eligible for the following equipment for protection against bad weather:

EITHER

One umbrella every year

OR

A one-piece fully lined nylon raincoat with cap every three years

OR

A two-piece PVC suit with cap, 2 patch pockets with flaps, zip front, elasticated waist on trousers every two years.

- (ii) In case of non-compliance to wear uniform/protective clothing/protective item, the procedures below will be applicable:
 - a) The officer concerned will be verbally cautioned for failing in his/her undertaking to wear uniforms/protective clothing/protective items;
 - b) In case of further non-compliance, the attention of the officer concerned will be drawn in writing to this effect;
 - c) The officer will equally be requested to abide, within a prescribed delay, by the undertaking which he/she has signed prior to the payment of the uniform allowance, failing which he/she may be liable to disciplinary action; and
 - d) In the event the officer still fails to abide by the written instructions within the given delay, payment of the uniform allowance will be stopped/withdrawn and the officer concerned will, in such circumstance, be required to submit written explanations following which appropriate action may be taken, as deemed necessary, by Management.

20. ALLOWANCES

ALLOWANCE FOR COLLECTION OF KEYS FOR OPENING AND CLOSING OF OFFICE

For collecting and depositing keys at Police Stations, a monthly allowance is paid as follows:

- a) Rs 375 provided an aggregate of 2 to 6 kms are covered daily over and above the home-to-office journey and back; and
- b) Rs 525 provided an aggregate of more than 6 kms are covered daily over and above the home-to-office journey and back.

OTHER ALLOWANCES

- (i) An allowance of Rs 6.00 per cup is presently payable for making and serving tea/coffee for official meetings/functions;
- (ii) For washing of towels: Rs 11 per towel;
- (iii) For washing of table cloth/ Curtains: Rs 75 per kg; and
- (iv) For making bulk photocopies: Rs 685

21. RETIREMENT IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

- (i) Compulsory retirement at the age of 65;
- (ii) As of right on or after attaining the age of 60;
- (iii) On the ground of age after attaining the age of 55;
- (iv) On marriage grounds (for female officers) – reckoning at least five years' service, irrespective of age; and
- (v) On Medical grounds.

22. OCCUPATIONAL, SAFETY AND HEALTH GUIDELINES

OA/SOAs play a crucial role in maintaining a safe and healthy work environment in an office setting. Hereunder are the core guidelines for the Auxiliary Cadre on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH):

(i) Familiarise themselves with Office Safety Procedures:

Understand and be familiar with the office's safety policies and procedures.

(ii) Maintain a Clean and Organised Workspace:

Keep the workspace neat and organised to prevent trip hazards. Ensure all cords and cables are properly secured and out of walkways.

(iii) Emergency Preparedness:

- a) Know the location of emergency exits, fire extinguishers, and first aid kits, and know the persons assigned to help in cases of emergencies;
- b) Familiarise themselves with evacuation procedures and assembly points; and
- c) OA/SOAs should also be trained in first aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

(iv) Report Hazards and Incidents:

Promptly report any safety hazards or incidents to the immediate supervisor or the designated Safety Officer.

(v) Chemical Safety:

- a) Be aware of the hazardous chemicals that are used in the workplace;
- b) Read and follow the safety instructions on all chemical labels;
- c) Wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as gloves and safety goggles when handling chemicals; and
- d) Store chemicals in safe and well-ventilated designated areas and follow proper labelling and disposal procedures.

(vi) Electrical Safety:

- a) Avoid overloading electrical outlets and extension sockets;
- b) Use caution when plugging in and unplugging electrical appliances;
- c) Avoid using electrical appliances in wet or humid areas;
- d) Report any damaged or frayed electrical cords to your supervisor immediately; and
- e) Do not tamper with electrical equipment.

(vii) Fire Safety:

- a) Familiarise themselves with fire evacuation routes and practice fire drills;
- b) Be aware of the location of fire exits and extinguishers;
- c) Never block fire exits, sprinklers, or fire alarms;
- d) Keep flammable materials away from heat sources; and
- e) Do not smoke in the workplace.

(viii) Hygiene and Sanitation:

- a) Maintain good personal hygiene to prevent the spread of illness; and
- b) Dispose of waste properly in designated bins.

(ix) Visitor Safety

- a) Greet visitors at the reception desk and ask how you can help them. Ensure that they are aware of safety procedures;
- b) Escort visitors to their destinations, especially in larger office buildings;
- c) If the visitor has an appointment, confirm the appointment and escort them to the appropriate person or department;
- d) If the visitor does not have an appointment, find out the purpose of his visit and direct him to the appropriate person or department;
- e) If the person they are visiting is not available, offer to take a message or schedule an appointment; and
- f) Provide visitors with any information or assistance they may need.

(x) Security Awareness:

- a) Be vigilant for unauthorised personnel and report any suspicious activity to security or management; and
- b) Follow access control procedures and badge policies.

(xi) Proper Use of Equipment:

- a) Only use equipment and machinery that you are trained and authorised to operate; and
- b) Report any malfunctioning equipment immediately.

(xii) Slips, trips and falls:

- a) Keep floors clean and dry, and free of clutter;
- b) Use non-slip mats in areas where spills are likely to occur;
- c) Be aware of uneven surfaces and tripping hazards; and
- d) Wear appropriate footwear, such as non-slip shoes.

(xiii) Health and Well-being:

- a) Take regular breaks as authorised to reduce stress and fatigue; and
- b) Stay hydrated and eat nutritious meals to maintain energy levels.

(xiv) Safe Lifting and Ergonomics:

- a) Use proper lifting techniques when moving heavy objects to prevent back injuries; and
- b) If the job involves lifting, bend your knees, keep your back straight, and lift properly. Avoid lifting heavy objects alone when assistance is available.

(xv) Continuous Improvement:

Actively seek opportunities for professional development and stay up-to-date with best practices in safety and health management.

(xvi) Training and Education:

Continually update your knowledge of OSH by attending training sessions and workshops.

(xvii) Teamwork and Communication:

- a) Collaborate with colleagues to identify and address safety concerns; and
- b) Communicate openly and honestly with supervisors regarding any OSH issues.

EXTRACT FROM CODE OF ETHICS FOR PUBLIC OFFICERS

A. VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The three guiding principles of the Code are as follows:

1. Public Officers shall fulfil their lawful obligations to the Government with professionalism, integrity and loyalty;
2. Public Officers shall perform their official duties honestly, faithfully and efficiently while respecting the rights of the public and their colleagues; and
3. Public Officers shall not bring the Civil Service into disrepute through their private activities.

Moreover, to inspire public confidence and trust, this Code rests upon several core values, which require that Public Officers behave with:

- ❖ **Integrity** – Putting the obligations of the Civil Service above one's interests.
- ❖ **Selflessness** – Avoid seeking personal gain or financial or other material benefits for one's family or friends through one's official position.
- ❖ **Impartiality** – Acting solely according to the merits of a case and serving the Government of the day, irrespective of one's political affinity or preference.
- ❖ **Objectivity** – Favouring meritocracy and basing one's advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of evidence.
- ❖ **Accountability** – Being responsible and accountable for one's decisions and actions.
- ❖ **Openness** – Being as open as possible in one's decisions and providing justification for one's actions whenever required.
- ❖ **Honesty** – Acting in good faith and being truthful.
- ❖ **Justice** – Adhering to the principles of natural justice.

Public Officers also have a duty to treat the public and their colleagues with courtesy and respect. They should therefore:

- (i) not cause embarrassment to colleagues or members of the public by their dress, speech or behaviour;
- (ii) not consume any alcoholic drink, not use and/or abuse illicit drugs or controlled substances. Consuming alcoholic drinks in a public place, which also includes the workplace, is an offence liable to a fine not exceeding Rs 10,000 and imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months under the Public Health Act;
- (iii) not smoke any tobacco product while on duty or in any public place or any other indoor area which is open to the public or where the public is permitted to have access. Smoking in a public place is an offence liable to fine and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months and a third or subsequent conviction;
- (iv) not engage in gambling by any means at the workplace;
- (v) not cause distress to their colleagues, or otherwise contribute to disruption of the working atmosphere in the workplace;
- (vi) not discriminate against any person on grounds of sex, marital status, colour, race, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, political opinion, occupation, status, sexual orientation, religious or ethical beliefs;
- (vii) not harass, bully or otherwise intimidate members of the public or colleagues;
- (viii) respect the privacy of individuals; and
- (ix) have due regard for the safety of the public and colleagues at the workplace.

B. GOOD PRACTICES DURING A PRE-ELECTION PERIOD

Public Officers should avoid becoming possibly the subject of complaints and they should, in particular:

- (i) not use government resources or their positions to support particular issues or parties during the election campaign;
- (ii) not become caught up in party political activities or be used for logistical support for political functions;
- (iii) not wear political badges or display political matters;
- (iv) when scheduled to speak at public functions, avoid controversial issues and limit their statements to facts and matters of administration; and
- (v) during working hours not to indulge in political debate and conversation.

C. POLITICAL IMPARTIALITY

- (i) Irrespective of their own political beliefs, Public Officers owe loyalty to the Government of the day;
- (ii) They should always serve the Government of the day;
- (iii) Public Officers should observe political neutrality in their day-to-day functions and avoid activities likely to impair, or seen to impair, their political impartiality or the political impartiality of the Public Service; and
- (iv) They should not, therefore, act in a way that is determined by party political considerations or use official resources for party purposes.

D. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- (i) A conflict of interest may be defined as a situation where the private interests of a Public Officer compete or conflict with the interests of the Government or the Officer's public duties in such a manner as to influence the objective exercise of his/her official or public duties;

- (ii) Conflicts of interest include pecuniary interests (i.e. financial interests or other material benefits or costs) or non-pecuniary interests (i.e. favouritism, nepotism, political, religious, family or other interests). They can involve the interests of the Public Officer, members of his/her immediate family or relatives (where these interests are known), business partners or associates, or their friends;
- (iii) Public Officers should avoid situations in which their private interest conflict, or might reasonably be perceived to conflict, with the impartial fulfilment of their official duties and the public interest. Thus, they should avoid having any financial or other interests or embark on any undertaking that could directly or indirectly compromise the performance of their duties;
- (iv) In many circumstances, the conflict, or potential conflict, is known only to the Public Officer. Therefore, in case a conflict of interest arises, the onus is on the Public Officer to disclose promptly, fully and appropriately any present or potential conflict of interest, he/she may have in a matter that is the subject of a consideration; and
- (v) Any Public Officer who fails to disclose his/her direct or indirect interest in a company, partnership or other undertaking with which the public body (which employs the Public Officer) proposes to deal, shall commit an offence under the Financial Crimes Commission Act 2023.

E. OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

- (i) Public Officers shall not engage in any outside employment, for remuneration or otherwise, unless prior approval has been obtained from the Responsible Officer (Secretary for Public Service for the officers of the Office Auxiliary Cadre); and
- (ii) Public Officers shall not accept employment or engage in activities which may conflict or interfere with the performance of their official duties as this may cast doubt on their own integrity and may adversely affect the image of the primary organisation for which they work and that of the Public Service.

F. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

- (i) In the course of their official duties, it is common for Public Officers to have access to confidential information or other secret documents;
- (ii) Public Officers should not, in any case whatsoever, misuse such information for their private interests or for the interests of others who may be their close relatives or friends;
- (iii) Public Officers should ensure that confidential information to which they may have access is kept secret and is not prematurely disclosed, owing to its impact on policies and influence on other Government decisions;
- (iv) The Public Officer shall disclose such information only if required to do so by law or upon obtaining proper authority and approval concerning the nature and extent of information to be disclosed. In these cases, the information disclosed should be factual and should not be altered in any way that would cause prejudice to the public institution;
- (v) Public Officers reporting information should not make any public comment or give their opinion on the information disclosed or on any official policy or practice. 'Public comment' includes:
 - a. taking part in public speaking engagements;
 - b. making comments on radio and television; and
 - c. expressing views in letters to the newspapers or in books, journals or notices.
- (vi) Public Officers shall be bound by and shall continue to observe, their duties of confidentiality even after they leave the service.

G. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS AND OTHER BENEFITS

- (i) Public Officers should not abuse their official position for personal gain; and
- (ii) They should not solicit or accept gifts, rewards or benefits, which might compromise their integrity and that of their organisation and the Civil Service. Gifts or benefits include but are not restricted to, free or less than market value accommodation, entertainment, hospitality and travel.

REFERENCES

- ❖ PRB Report 2021
- ❖ Public Service Commission Regulations
- ❖ Human Resource Management Manual
- ❖ Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005
- ❖ Code of Ethics for Public Officers
- ❖ Circulars from the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms
- ❖ Official Secrets Act
- ❖ Public Officers' Protection Act

DISCLAIMER

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information presented, the authors and contributors of this handbook do not assume any responsibility or liability for any errors, omissions or damages that may result from the use of the information contained therein.

This handbook is not a substitute for professional advice.

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