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The Block 2 of the Office Procedure course largely discusses the aspect of Handling mails, the different types of office forms and stationery and the office equipments and machines.

Thus, this Block has been divided into the following three Units covering:

**Unit 1**: Handling Mills

**Unit 2**: Office Forms and Stationery

**Unit 3**: Office Equipment and Machines

This block contains many pictures and illustrations which you will really find very useful.
UNIT 1 HANDLING MAIL

Structure

1.0 Objectives

1.1 Introduction (Inward and Outward Mail)
   1.1.1 Planning Mail Handling Operations
   1.1.2 Kinds of Mail
   1.1.3 Procedure of Handling Mail: Electronic Mail and Physical Mail
      1.1.3.1 Handling of Inward Mail
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1.2 Mail Room Equipment

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   1.4.1 Opening a Speed Post Account

1.5 Courier Post

1.6 Courier Services

1.7 Airmail Services

1.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.9 Let Us Sum Up

1.10 Terminal Questions

1.11 Reference Books

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- define mail;
- classify the different types of mail;
- explain the two types of handling of mail: electronic and physical;
- understand the procedure of handling incoming and outgoing mail;
- list various types of postal services;
- explain the importance of speed post; and
- describe courier post and courier services.

1.1 INTRODUCTION (INWARD AND OUTWARD MAIL)

It is essential for the business houses to initiate and maintain contacts with their customers, government organizations, financial institutions, investors, employees for survival and growth. As written communication is the most formal and reliable form of communication, email, letters, memos, circulars, endorsements, reports etc. are written regularly to exchange information among business associates. Sending and receiving of written communication of various types is termed as Mail.
Handling of Mail is one of the important functions of an office. The Private Secretary should have sound knowledge regarding the procedure of handling of mail to be followed in the organization. Efficient and effective handling of mail helps a company to boost its business and have better image of the organization. On the other hand, inefficient and ineffective mailing system may cause delay and loss of business.

1.1.1 Planning Mail Handling Operations

Mail is a form of written communication sent out or received in the organization through some agency. The agencies which help in transmission of mail are:

- Internet (E-mail)
- Fax Machine
- Post Office
- Special Messenger
- Courier etc.

In big organizations, a separate Mailing Department is set up to carry out mailing operations. However, in small organizations, a Private Secretary has to handle mail in addition to other secretarial functions.

A Private Secretary or an Office Manager generally plans mail handling work in an organization. Systematic planning of mail handling ensures that mailing operations are carried out efficiently and effectively without delay. It also helps to ensure that -

a) Every mail received or prescribed in the organisation gets attended.
b) There are no last minute hassles.
c) Judicious use of Mail Room Equipment.
d) Selection of proper agency for transmission of mail.
e) Proper recording of mail.

1.1.2 Kinds of Mail

There are three kinds of mail received or sent out from an organization. They include:

a) Incoming (Inward) Mail: Any type of written communication coming to an organization is termed as Incoming mail.
b) Outgoing (Outward) Mail: Written communication sent out or dispatched from an organization is called Outgoing Mail.
c) Inter-Department Mail: The mail received or sent from one department to another department within the same organization is Inter-Departmental Mail.

In business houses, there is a defined procedure for handling incoming and outgoing mail. Inter-Departmental Mail is handled by the executives according to their requirements and convenience.

1.1.3 Procedure of Handling Mail: Electronic Mail and Physical Mail

As stated above, mail can be received electronically or physically (manually). Electronically mail can be received and sent out by e-mail, fax, mobile phone etc.
This type of mail does not require any elaborate handling procedure. The mail is mostly addressed by name on individual’s address or number. Fax messages on receipt are directly delivered to person concerned for further action.

Physical mail handling may include agencies viz. Post Office, Special Messenger, Courier etc. and a sequential order for efficient handling of the same is followed in every organization.

**Handling of Electronic Mail**

Electronic Mail or E-mail is used to transmit messages from one computer to another computer with the help of internet. An e-mail message consists of two parts: the message header and message body. The message header contains space for email address (s) and subject. The content of the mail is written in the message body. The mail is easy to compose and transmit to the other parties just with a click of button.

E-mail has given rise to concept of Paperless Office because of the following advantages:

- Speedy delivery
- economy
- Security
- Feasibility in sending bulk mail
- Possibility of use of pictures, demonstrations etc.
- Automated records

The problems which may be associated with e-mail include threat of virus, hacking, of mail, crowded in-box etc. However, with the various techniques, it is possible to overcome all these hazards. It is important that in-box of mail should be checked-in regularly.

Due to exponential growth of mail volumes, **Digital Mail Rooms** are set up now-a-days in organisations. In such Mail Rooms, documents are scanned, archived and retrieved in original image format. Electronic mail formats, fax etc. can also be combined with document processing. The setting of Digital Mail Rooms has reduced decision making cycles, saved paper costs and rationalized circulation of information.

**Handling of Physical Mail**

Effective and efficient handling of all incoming and outgoing physical mail reflects efficiency of the Secretary. He has to outline the steps which are to be followed for the mail handling.

Post Office provides various facilities regarding domestic and international carriage of mail which are given in the Section 1.4 of the same unit. Local mail of urgent nature can be sent with the help of a Special Messenger. Sending mail by this mode ensures quick delivery of mail along with its acknowledgement. Now-a-days, Courier companies are also playing a vital role due to various services they are offering to their clients in speedy disposal of mail. This has also become a popular mode of delivery of mail, whether local or international.

**1.1.3.1 Handling of Inward Mail**

In every organization, there are defined steps for physical handling of inward mail so that the mail could reach the concerned official without delay. These steps vary
Office Procedure-II depending on the size and nature of the organization. The following procedure is usually followed in handling of incoming mails if mail is received manually.

1. Receiving Mail

Mail is delivered once or twice a day by a Postman while mail from special messengers or courier companies keep pouring throughout the day. A Junior Secretary or Mailing Clerk is entrusted with the task of receiving the mail and providing acknowledgement of the receipt, wherever necessary. In case the mail is to be received from Post Box or Post Bag, a person is deputed to collect the same from the Post Office once or twice a day.

2. Sorting Mail

After receiving the mail, it is necessary to sort the received mail so that mail marked as Private, Personal, Secret, Confidential etc. are not opened. This type of mail is directly delivered to the person concerned unopened. Important mail viz. court summons, tenders, confidential reports etc. is sorted out from the routine mail to accord priority in opening. Routine mail consisting of sales letters, catalogues, product literature etc. are opened at last. Trays or open racks with separate compartments are available in Mailing Department in which segregated mail is kept while sorting.

Trays or racks used for sorting mail have the name of the departments clearly marked on them. The sorted mail is put in these trays or rack for onward distribution.

3. Opening Mail

A paper knife is generally used for opening envelopes. In case of large mail, a Letter Opening Machine is helpful as it improves efficiency and opens the mail neatly. While opening an envelope, it should be ensured that:

a) contents of the envelope are not damaged.

b) before disposing off the envelope, nothing is left inside the envelope.

c) enclosures are fastened if they are not properly tagged as there may be chances of losing the same.

Sometimes, it is necessary to preserve the envelope received along with the mail. In such cases, the same is attached along with the letter.

4. Examining Contents and Stamping Mail

After opening the mail, a Secretary should briefly examine its contents. Examining of contents is done to again sort out the letters and the mail which needs immediate action is accorded priority. Sometimes, there are certain letters which need time-bound reply and are to be dealt on urgent basis.

Examining of contents of mail also helps to know if any of the enclosures of the letter are missing. In such cases, the facts are recorded on the letter.

All the mail received is date-stamped to authenticate receiving of the same in the organization. It can be done with the help of a manual rubber stamp or an Automatic Numbering and Dating Machine. A specimen of date stamp normally used in an organization has the following details:
5. Recording Mail

An Incoming Mail Register is maintained to make a brief record of all the incoming mail. Recording of mail helps in tracing out any received letter at a later date.

The Incoming Mail Register has a column – Date of Reply which helps to ensure that all the receiving mail has been attended to.

**Specimen of Incoming Mail Register**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No./ Diary No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Ref. No. of letter</th>
<th>Name and Address of Sender</th>
<th>Brief Subject</th>
<th>Deptt/ official referred</th>
<th>Initials of Receiver</th>
<th>Date of Reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Some private companies do not carry out the practice of recording of mail as it is quite time consuming. If the mail received is large, it also results in delay in taking action on the mail.

Incoming Mail Register is also called Diary Register or Dak Register.

6. Distributing Mail

The recorded mail is again sorted out, if required and then immediately distributed to the concerned departments by a peon or messenger.

7. Follow-up Action

Every incoming mail which needs a follow-up action should be quickly attended to by the concerned official. In business houses, it is ensured that every mail received should be disposed off within maximum 3-4 days, wherever possible.

1.1.3.2 Handling of Outward Mail

Like incoming mail, speedy disposal of outward mail is equally important. Delay in sending mail not only results in loss of business prospects but also creates a bad image for the company. While on the other hand, quick replies of mail shows the importance which has been attached to it. The following steps are generally followed in case of handling of outward mail physically:

1. Production of Mail

The letters to be sent out of an organization are prepared and signed by an authorized person. Every outgoing mail should bear a reference number which facilitates future reference of the same. The mail ready to be dispatched is kept in ‘Out Tray’ by the secretary.
2. Collection of Mail

All outgoing letters are collected twice a day by a peon deputed by Mailing Department for onward transmission. A secretary should ensure that the mail is collected timely so that it could be dispatched from the office without delay.

It is also the duty of the secretary or (administrative or executive assistant) to mention the preferred mode of dispatch of the mail. The Mailing Department or Despatch Section delivers the mail according to the instructions given on the mail.

3. Recording Mail

Every outgoing mail is to be recorded in a register called Despatch Register or Mail Outward Register. A specimen of the same is given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outgoing Mail Register/ Despatch Register</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S.No./ Despatch No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local Mail which is sent by a Special Messenger is recorded in a Peon Book. A Peon Book has following columns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEON BOOK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S.No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Writing of Addresses

If the mail is to be sent in an envelope, the same should be selected of a suitable size and according to the size and number of paper (s) to be inserted in it. While writing an address on an envelope, make sure that the address should be written parallel to the length of the cover and in the lower half and towards the right-hand side of the front of the article, leaving a clear margin at least 3 centimeter at the top for the postage stamps and labels, postmarks and other indications.

Writing of correct, legible and complete address of the receiver on the outward mail is very important to be taken care by a Secretary.

The addressed Post town should be noted in block letters and according to the approved spellings in the List of Post Offices along with the PIN (Postal Index Number) Code.

Postal Index Number

It is unique 6 digit number, shortly known as PIN code. The First digit denotes the Circle and next two digits denote area and remaining digits denote post office. Hence, with use PIN code, very speed and accurate postal delivery is possible all over the country.
In case of addressing large mail, an Addressing Machine can be used which saves a lot of time and energy of a secretary besides reproduction of correct address on the outgoing mail.

5. **Folding letters and Inserting them into Envelopes**

Letters intended to be inserted into envelopes should be folded in such a manner that it has minimum number of folds according to the size of the envelopes. Letters and enclosures must be folded together.

Folding and Inserting Machines can be used to make the task easy for a secretary in case of handling of large outgoing mail.

6. **Sealing of Envelopes**

The next step is to seal the envelopes to secure the contents of letters. The mail containing financial documents, registered and insured articles should be sealed carefully. Book Post mail mostly consisting of Product literatures, catalogues, price lists etc. are sometimes not sealed for the convenience of the receiver.

7. **Affixing Stamps on Envelopes**

On the outgoing mail to be sent through Post Office, postage stamps of required denominations are to be affixed as per the prescribed rates. The mail is weighed to calculate the correct amount of the postage stamps. Over-stamping and under-stamping are to be avoided at all costs.

Franking Machines are commonly used by offices for stamping the outgoing mail. Letters which are to be sent by special messenger and courier companies are not to be stamped.

8. **Posting Mail**

Posting of Mail is the last step in the procedure of handling of outgoing mail.

Letters intended to be sent through Post Office are sent by a peon to the nearest Post Office. Mail marked as Registered, Speed Post, Insured etc. are submitted at the counter of the Post Office and a proof of delivery of the mail is obtained.

Local mail which is to be sent through special messenger is handed over to the concerned person along with Peon Book.

Courier Mail is handed over to the representatives of courier companies, when they arrive as per the specified time schedules.

### 1.2 MAIL ROOM EQUIPMENT

In case of large mail to be handled physically, mechanical equipment are used in Mail Room to handle the incoming and outgoing mail efficiently and effectively. Use of various mechanical devices also helps to reduce monotony and increase accuracy of mailing operations. Equipment and machines in Mail Room has following advantages:

- increases in the speed of operations.

- saving of time.

- improve in efficiency and accuracy.
Office Procedure-II

- elimination of wastage.
- simplification of fixing of postage and avoidance of misuse of postage stamps.

The following Mail Room Equipment are commonly used in an organization:

1. **Letter Opening Machine**

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

   ![Fig. 1.1: Letter Opening Machine](image)

2. **Numbering and Dating Machines**

   An Automatic Numbering and Dating Machine is used for stamping on the mail. In this machine, the next serial numbers and date automatically changes after every use with the help of self-inking stamp pad.

3. **Folding and Inserting Machine**

   A Folding Machine can fold approx. 1,000 to 10,000 sheets per hour. It is possible to fold and insert letters into an envelope with this machine. The machine is to be adjusted as per the required number of folds according to size of envelope.

   ![Fig. 1.2: Folding and Inserting Machine](image)
4. **Sealing Machine**

Sealing Machine helps in automatically moistening the flaps of an envelope and then sealing the same. Sealing with wax can also be conveniently done with the help of this machine. Hand operated sealing machines can seal about 100 envelopes a minute while electrically operated ones can operate at a speed of 11000 envelopes in an hour. The work of sealing of mail can be performed very neatly and efficiently with the help of this machine.

![Fig. 1.3: Sealing Machine](image)

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5. **Mailing Scale**

A Mailing Scale is used to weigh outgoing mail and ascertain postage stamps which are to be affixed on it. Digital scales at a very economical price are widely available in the market. It is an essential equipment in Mail Room for performing mailing operations.

![Fig. 1.4: Mailing Scale](image)

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6. **Addressograph (Addressing Machine)**

It helps in printing of addresses on envelopes, parcels etc. The machine is used when mail is to be sent to those customers which are regular and frequent on mailing list. It can be operated manually or electrically. In this machine, there is a ribbon to give print of the addresses from already prepared embossed plates. Once the address plates are prepared, it can be repeatedly used any number of times. The required plates are selected and fed into the machine from one side. After operating the machine, one can get the addressed envelopes from the other side.
7. **Franking Machine**

A Postal Franking Machine is a stamping machine intended to stamp impressions of dies of approved design on postal articles for payment of postage fee. A commission of 1-1/2 per cent is permitted on the value of franks used.

The use of a Franking Machine except under a valid license issued by the Head of the Postal Division is prohibited. The franked articles are tendered at the counter of Post Office bundled in separate bundles according to the value of the franks and each consignment must be accompanied by a Window Delivery Ticket for identification of the licensee’s representative.

The impressions of the franking machines recorded on postal articles should not be interfered with in any way. Impression should be of bright red color, clear and distinct and should not overlap. As far as possible, they should be on the right top corner on the address side of the article itself or an address wrapper or an address label firmly attached to it. Franking is allowed up to any amount. There may be more than one impression of the value die but only one of the license die on each article.

The main benefits of using the machine include less risk of misappropriation of postal stamps, avoidance of errors in stamping and simplification in keeping the account of stamps used. There is no need to go to Post Office every time. However, as stated above, the franked mail cannot be posted in a letter box but has to be handed over at the Post Office. Errors, if any, in franking mail also cannot be rectified.

Recently Department of Posts has introduced Remotely Managed Franking Machine in place of Electronic Franking Machine w.e.f. 16.8.2010 based on a new technology with security features like generation of 2D barcode with franked impression and elimination of human intervention for uploading credit in Franking Machine.

Now-a-days, business houses used Mail Accounting Software to manage postage expenses. The software helps in collecting, maintaining and reporting mail accounting data. It also helps in tracking and better controlling business mail expenses.
Handling of incoming and outgoing mail is quite time consuming and monotonous job.

The mail room equipment discussed above helps a secretary to overcome this limitation and handle mailing operations in the most effective and efficient manner.

1.3 SPECIAL MAIL POSTAL SERVICES

Though e-mail and courier services are the most commonly used mode of transmission of written communication now-a-days, every organization still sends a large number of letters, parcels etc. through a Post Office. In India, Department of Posts offers various services at affordable rates for carriage of mail, remittance of money, etc. besides acting as a financial institution.

To improve quality of international mail processing, all Foreign Post Offices and Sub Foreign Post Offices have been computerized. International Parcel Post Hubs have also been established at Delhi, Mumbai and Kochi for specialized handling of parcels.

Department of Posts has launched a pilot project ‘Project Arrow’ to lay the foundation for a comprehensive, long term transformation of India Post. The project ensures at providing a fast, reliable and efficient postal services to the customers.

The strong IT-base of Department of Posts has also made it possible to offer a range of e-enabled services to their customers such as on-line web based domestic money transmission service, electronic money order, e-payment etc.

Some of the special services offered by Department of Posts regarding carriage of mail include:

Certificate of Posting

The object of granting Certificate of Posting is to give an assurance that letters and other articles entrusted to servants or messengers for posting have actually been posted. The grant of a certificate will not, however, mean that the letters and articles in respect of which the certificate is issued were fully prepaid with postage stamps nor will it guarantee in any way the dispatch of the articles entered in the certificate on the same day, unless they are handed over well in time to catch the last dispatch of mails for the day for the particular destination concerned.

It must be clearly understood that the articles in respect of which such certificates are issued are not registered and that they are treated in exactly the same manner
as if they had been posted in a letter box. In the event of loss, damage or delay, the certificates will confer no claim for compensation, nor do they furnish any proof of the nature of the contents.

**Post Boxes**

Post Boxes are available on rent at certain Post Offices. Only fully prepaid unregistered mail namely letters, inland letter cards, postcards, aerogrammes, registered newspapers, books, or the post bearing the Post Box No. are delivered through post box.

**Post Bag**

The system of delivery of Postal articles in a bag, which along with a lock and duplicate key is to be supplied by the renter, is available at all delivery post offices, whether post box system is available there or not.

**Identification Cards**

A system of identity cards has been introduced by Post Office for the benefit of tourists, traveling representatives of firms and other members of the public who experience difficulty in establishing their identity in connection with postal transactions, e.g., receipt of registered and insured articles and payment of money orders in the post town through which they pass. These cards can be obtained from any head post office by literate persons whose identity is well established in the locality in which they reside.

The card contains a full description of its holder, his signature and photograph and is valid for a period of three years from the date of issue. After the expiry of the period of validity of the card, a fresh card will have to be applied for.

The use of these cards is entirely optional. Holders ordinarily receive delivery of postal articles and payment of money orders on their presentation but in case of any doubt, it will be open to postmasters to make such further enquiry as they may consider necessary to establish the identity of the applicants with the holders of the cards and to demand additional corroborative evidence of such identity.

**Poste Restante**

The Poste Restante is intended solely for the convenience of strangers and travelers who are not certain about their addresses in a particular city where they are touring. This facility helps them to receive their mail through a Post Office.

All articles superscribed “To be kept till called for”, “To await arrival”, or in any similar way, and also articles addressed “Post Office” are held to fall under the head “Poste Restante”.

A Poste Restante article (except value-payable) is kept in the Post Office to which it is addressed for a period not exceeding one month.

In cases, in which articles are superscribed “To await arrival”, or “To be kept till called for”, and the address gives no further indications of the intention of the sender, the responsibility of the Post Office is limited to the retaining of such articles in deposit for the prescribed period.

**Recorded Delivery**

The service is available to all classes of postal articles for which registered service is available (except parcels) for delivery within India.
Recorded Delivery articles should carry the superscription ‘Recorded Delivery’ and be prepaid with the appropriate postage and the prescribed fee per article. Articles should be presented at the counter of post office along with a record of posting form.

**Business Reply Service**

Under this service, a person who wishes to obtain a reply from his client without putting him to the expenditure of paying the postage charges may attach or enclose with his communication an addressed reply card, envelope or label of a special design. Such a card, envelope or label can be posted by the client in the ordinary manner, but without any stamp. The usual postage charges plus a small additional amount for each article will be collected from the addressee.

Envelopes and labels must bear on the address side, either printed thereon or on a label affixed thereto: (a) the printed name and address of the permit holder to whom the card or envelope is to be delivered (b) the permit number (c) the name of the post office issuing the permit (d) two thick vertical lines in black or any other colour near the right hand edge, (e) the words “Business Reply Card”, “Business Reply Envelope”, or “Business Reply Label” as the case may be, (f) the words “No postage stamp necessary if posted in India”, and (g) the words “Postage will be paid by the addressee”. Sufficient space should be left for post-marking at the top of the card or envelope.

**Blind Literature Packets**

Blind literature packets are exempted from payment of the fees viz. registration fee and fee for acknowledgement besides being exempt from the payment of postage.

Postage-free blind literature packets are transmitted by surface route only. If they are to be sent by air, the airmail charge as prescribed for packets has to be paid.

Papers of any kind, periodicals, books and letters to or from blind persons impressed in “Braille” or other special type for the use of the blind, may be transmitted by post as “blind literature” packets provided that they are posted in accordance with the following conditions:

(a) The Packets shall consist only articles for the use of the blind, and shall not contain any communication either in writing or printed in ordinary type.

(b) The Packet shall bear on the outside the inscription “Literature for the Blind” and the written or printed name and address of the sender.

**Registration**

Registration makes the transmission of an article more secure as it passes through the hands of postal officers, under special precautions. But the Post Office is not responsible for the loss of a registered article, or for any injury which its contents may sustain during the transmission. The risk of injury is diminished by the use of the special registration envelopes sold at post offices.

Letters, letter cards, postcards, book and pattern packets, blind literature packets, parcels and newspapers prepaid with postage at newspaper rates of postage, etc. may be registered at any post office for transmission by post to any other post office.
The prepayment of the postage and registration fee is compulsory in the case of all registered articles.

**Insurance**

Registered letters, value-payable registered letters, registered parcels and value-payable registered parcels may be insured up to the value of Rs. 600/- at branch post offices, and up to the value of Rs. 1,00,000/- at such other post offices, as are authorized, to accept articles for insurance. Such post offices as are authorized deliver insured articles, provided that in no case shall such value exceed the real value of the contents of the article insured; provided also that articles containing gold, coin or bullion Government currency notes or bank notes or any combination of these shall be insured for the actual value of the contents. For the purpose of this rule, papers such as securities, legal documents, etc. may be regarded as having a real value.

**Value Payable Articles**

The value payable system is designed to meet the requirements of those persons who wish to pay for articles sent to them at the time of receipt of the articles and also to meet the requirements of traders and others who wish to recover through the agency of the Post Office the value of article supplied by them.

Registered parcels, registered letters, registered book packets and newspapers prepaid with postage of newspaper rates of postage and with registration fee may be transmitted by the inland post as value payable postal articles, provided that the amount specified for remittance to the sender in the case of any such postal article does not exceed Rs. 5000/-.

No such postal article as aforesaid will be accepted at any post office for transmission by post as a value payable postal article unless the sender declares that it is sent in execution of a bona-fide order received by him.

**Direct Post**

Service is given vide which advertising materials is distributed directly to prospective customers.

With the increasing commercial activity in India, the need for Direct Advertising of their products and services by the business organizations is growing. Direct Mail, which can be defined as ‘printed matter usually carrying a sales message or announcement designed to elicit a response from a carefully selected consumer or business market’ is the most potent medium for Direct Advertising. In the advanced countries, Direct Mail now constitutes a pre dominant portion of mail traffic handled by Postal administrations. Direct mail can be both addressed as well as un-addressed.

Only un-addressed postal articles like letters, cards, brochures, questionnaires, pamphlets, samples, promotional items like CDs/floppies and Cassettes etc., coupons, posters, mailers or any other form of printed communication that is not prohibited by the Indian Post Office Act 1898 or Indian Post Office Rules 1933 are accepted. A minimum quantity of 1000 pieces can be accepted under the ‘Direct Post’. Articles posted as ‘Direct Post’ will bear no address or name on the communication. These will be accepted in bulk in designated offices and will not be posted in a letter box.
The senders of Direct Post can specify the numbers and areas, in which the sender wishes the Direct Post articles to be distributed. However, no commitment would be given for delivery of the article to any particular address or a person. The sender would be informed that the articles handed over by him had been delivered according to his instructions.

In case the sender desires the articles to be printed, or requires any other pre-mailing activity, this could also be provided on payment under the business post, separately. Though these activities can be combined with Direct Post, they do not form part of the product ‘Direct Post’.

**Business Post**

It includes total pre-mailing solutions including collection/printing, inserting, and addressing of mail of clients.

**Media Post**

India Post offers a service through which advertisements can be sent by media companies on Post cards, letters, walls of post offices, letter boxes, stationary etc so that they are received by large number of people.

**International Registered Post**

In International Registered Post, delivery time is same as normal international post. The only difference between normal post and registered post is that registered post articles must be presented before the counter. At every stage, it is being registered by the postal dept. As obvious, charges for international registered post is higher. One has to pay registration charges and fuel surcharge. Currently India Post is charging Rs. 21/- for first 20 grams packet for normal Post. For international registered post, charges are : Normal post charge + 10Rs. Registration Charge + 2 Rs. fuel surcharge.

Registered International Post is the one of the safest as well as the cheapest mailing system for international post from India. Every registered post requires signature confirmation from the final delivery point.

**Logistics Post**

It is a brand new service from India Posts for sending parcels and large consignments across the nation and around the world. The entire distribution side of the logistics infrastructure from collection to distribution, from storage to carriage, from order preparation to order fulfillment is managed. Logistics Post is an ideal service for sending large consignments including multi-parcels, just-in-time parcels, bulk-break consignments and goods of any weight. While Parcel Post offers weight up to 31 kg, Logistics Post has no weight limit. Logistics Post offers not only physical logistics services but also provides comprehensive supply chain management services, leading to improvement in the service level efficiency.

**Express Mail Service (EMS)**

It is an international express postal service which delivers through local postal network of different countries. Online tracking is possible for most countries of EMS network.
1.4 SPEED POST

Speed Post is a very high speed express service for letters and documents with time-bound delivery across the nation and around the world. Speed Post offers a money-back guarantee, under which the Speed Post fee will be refunded if the mail is not delivered within the published delivery norms.

Speed Post links more than 1200 towns in India with 290 Speed Post Centres in the national network and around 1000 Speed Post Centres in the state network. For regular users, Speed Post provides delivery ‘anywhere in India’ under contractual service.

Speed Post delivers ‘Value for money’ to everyone everywhere, delivering local Speed Post up to 10 grams @ INR 12, inclusive of Service Tax. It has a scheme called ‘One India, One Rate’ scheme which has been launched @ INR 21 for all destinations across India, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari.

For corporate customers and to regular users, Speed Post provides ‘Home collection’, credit facilities, on-line tracking, account management and personalized services.

1.4.1 Opening A Speed Post Account

For corporate customers and regular user, Speed Post provides many value added services including pick-up from the premises, convenient monthly billings, account management facilities, assistance in import/export procedures of shipments, corporate tracking facilities, volume discounts etc. When we open a Speed Post account, we open the door to convenience and customized solutions, as per our requirements. As an account holder of Speed Post, we will have the assistance of a Marketing Executive in managing our accounts in all respects. For having the Speed Post account, we have to just fill a form on-line and submit it.

Check Your Progress A

1) Fill up the following blanks:-
   a) ............................................ is unique 6 digit number, shortly known as PIN code.
   b) The enveloped is ..................................................to calculate the correct amount of the postage stamps.
   c) ....................................................... is the system of delivery of Postal articles in a bag, which along with a lock and duplicate key is to be supplied by the renter, is available at all delivery post offices, whether post box system is available there or not.
   d) A ................................................... machine is a stamping machine intended to stamp impressions of dies of approved design on private and official postal articles in payment of postage and postal fees.
   e) ....................................................... is very high speed express service for letters and documents with time-bound delivery across the nation and around the world.

2) State whether each of the following statements are True or False:-
   a) Mail received electronically requires an elaborate handling procedure.
   b) An Incoming Mail Register is maintained to make a brief record of all the incoming mail. Recording of mail helps in tracing out any received letter at a later date.
c) The Poste Restante is intended solely for the convenience of strangers and travelers who are not certain about their addresses in a particular city where they are touring.

d) Franking Machine helps in printing of addresses on envelopes, parcels etc.

e) Registration of articles should carry the superscription ‘Recorded Delivery’ and be prepaid with the appropriate postage and the prescribed fee per article.

1.5 COURIER POST

A courier is a person or a company which delivers messages, packages and mail in person.

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

1.6 COURIER SERVICES

Due to features viz. high speed, security, tracking, acknowledgement and committed delivery schedules, courier services have witnessed a phenomenal growth in modern era.

Courier services are popular among the business organizations as they offer the following solutions to the customers in regard to mail delivery:

- Delivery of any type of article of any value or weight, (e.g. perishable commodities, medicines etc.).
- Reliable and safe delivery.
- Speedy delivery as they follow stringent time schedules.
- Wide coverage (almost all corners of globe).
- Transit insurance facility.
- Facility of consignment status by web based Track and Trace System which can be had on mobile and e-mail.
- Proof of delivery on request.
- Maintenance of quality standards.
- Provision of logistic solutions like go-down facilities, packing etc. as per customer’s needs.
- Processing of mass mail (envelope labeling in case of product promotional literature, sending of greetings etc.)

The world’s largest courier companies include DHL, FedEx, OBC Express Ltd., UPS, etc.
1.7 AIRMAIL SERVICES

All First Class mails and money order are given air transmission as a matter of course, without payment of any additional air fee, wherever such air conveyance is available and would be advantageous. Other classes of mails, viz. book sample and pattern packets, registered newspapers, blind literature packets and parcels are required to pay requisite air surcharge, if they are to be given air transmission.

All surcharged air mail articles must bear the prescribed Blue Air Mail label available gratis at the Post Office, on the top left-hand corner on the address side. The pre-payment of the full air mail fee on parcels and of at least 71 per cent of the total charges including the air fee on all other surcharged articles is obligatory.

All the special services like registration, acknowledgement due, etc., are admissible in the case of air mail articles as in the case of surface mail articles. In such cases, the weight of the acknowledgement card or other forms is taken along with that of the article in calculating the air mail fee.

In all other respects, the rules governing the similar classes of mails for surface transmission will apply in the case of corresponding classes of air mail articles.

Limited air-lift

For the convenience of the public, a special procedure of giving air lift only over the difficult sections of the route in the case of articles for certain remote areas at a concessional rate of air fee has been introduced. For the rest of the journey, the articles will be carried by the normal surface route. Such articles may, however, be given air-transmission for the entire journey at the normal rates of air surcharge.

1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress A
1. Fill in the Blank:-
   a) Postal Index Number
   b) weighed
   c) Post Bag
   d) Franking Machine
   e) Speed Post

2. True an False:-
   a) False
   b) True
   c) True
   d) False
   e) False

1.9 LET US SUM UP

Written communication received and sent out from an organization is known as Mail. Mail can be handled physically or electronically. Mail is of three types: Incoming Mail, Outgoing Mail and Inter-Departmental Mail. The mail handling work should be planned and organized in the most systematic and efficient manner. The process of handling of physical mail involves various steps like Receiving Mail, Sorting Mail, Opening Mail, Scrutinizing contents and sorting, Date Stamping, Recording Mail and Distributing Mail. The process of handling of outgoing mail involves the steps viz. Signature and Reference, Collecting Mail from Departments,
Sorting collected mail, Recording outgoing mail, Addressing Envelopes, Folding the letters and inserting them into envelopes, Sealing and stamping of envelopes and Posting Mail. Various mail room equipment like Letter Opener, Numbering and Dating Machine, Folding Machine, Sealing Machine, Mailing Scale, Addressing Machine and Franking Machine play an important role in carrying out mailing operations where volume of mail to be handled is large. Various services like speed post, postal registration, postal insurance, certificate of posting, Poste Restante, Post Box, Post Bag, Identification Cards, Business Reply Cards, Logistics Post, Business Post, Media Post, Direct Post, etc. are some important mail carriage services offered by Department of Posts. Courier post is customized services for door-to-door delivery of mail. In addition to postal services, courier services are also used widely by business organizations for carriage of their mail. They include delivery of any type of article of any value or weight, reliable and safe delivery, speedy delivery as they follow stringent time schedules, wide coverage (almost all corners of globe), transit insurance facility, facility of consignment status by web based Track and Trace System which can be had on mobile and e-mail, proof of delivery on request etc.

1.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Suggest various steps for handling of Incoming Mail.
2. Outline the procedure of handling of Outgoing Mail.
3. Discuss any three Mail Room Equipment which are useful in performing mailing operations efficiently.
4. Differentiate between:
   a) Electronic Mail Handling and Physical Mail Handling
   b) Post Box and Post Bag
5. Describe any five facilities given by Department of Posts regarding carriage of mail.
6. Explain various courier services which may be provided to business houses.
7. How Peon Book is different from Mail Outward Register?
8. Describe the use of:
   a) Remotely Managed Franking Machine
   b) Mail Accounting Software
   c) Poste Restante
   d) Identification Cards

1.11 REFERENCE BOOKS

1) Administrative Office Management by Dr. R. K. Chopra
2) Office Management by P. K. Ghosh
3) Secretarial Duties by John Harrison
4) Modern Office Management by Neuner and Lewis Keeling
UNIT 2 OFFICE FORMS AND STATIONERY

Structure

2.0 Objectives

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Meaning and Significance of Office Forms

2.3 Benefits of Office Forms

2.4 Types of Office Forms

2.5 Effective Form Control System
   25.1 Steps for Introduction of New Forms
   25.2 Designing of Office Form

2.6 Effective Stock Control System
   26.1 Automated Stock Control System

2.7 Principles and Methods of Purchasing Stationery

2.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.9 Let Us Sum Up

2.10 Terminal Questions

2.11 Reference Books

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- state the meaning and significance of office forms;
- outline the benefits of using forms;
- list various types of forms;
- describe technologies used with Enterprise Forms Automation;
- develop effective stock control system;
- list steps to introduce a new form;
- design an office form;
- identify objectives of Automated Stock Control System;
- explain principles for better utilization and management of the stationery items; and
- devise plans regarding the purchase of stationery and its optimum use

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Whether one wishes to buy a flat or car, open or operate a bank account, enter into a legal contract, take admission in school or college, apply for a job or loan,
file income tax return, be a part of lucky draw or get a passport, forms are present everywhere. Forms have become indispensable way of securing desired essential information for efficiently carrying out business dealings. In forms, as one needs to fill only precise information with limited number of words, both user of the form as well as user of information - are benefitted which leads to saving of time and energy.

Forms are widely used every day in offices in recording and communicating information. They are the basic tool of office operations. In an office, be it purchase of raw materials, completion of tax formalities, finalization of rent agreements, application of public issues etc., everything is done with the help of forms. Employees fill feedback, leave application, requirement of advance from provident fund, job appraisal etc. on specifically designed application forms of the organization. Every form designed in office is unique in nature and is designed to receive restricted and exclusive information.

Besides forms, management of stationery in office is an important area looked after by a secretary or an Office Manager. Though the modern concept of Paperless Office is popular but in reality, no office can work hundred per cent smoothly without the use of stationery and office supplies. It is one of the important duties of a Secretary or an Office Manager to ensure uninterrupted flow of stationery items and procure material which are economical with quality and service.

### 2.2 MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF OFFICE FORMS

A form is a structured record which has space for entering information. It is a mode to receive, pass and store information. The information accumulated in a form is transmitted or used for taking further action.

A computer generated form is a document that contains blank fields in which the user can type information with the help of keyboard. The information on these forms is generally transferred to a computer data base. Later on, it may be processed and analyzed from a statistical point of view, if necessary. A computer generated form is widely used as the form can be posted on e-mail just with a click of a button. A considerable paper work is reduced and speed of operations increased.

**Significance of Office Forms**

Office forms play a very significant role in handling administrative operations efficiently and effectively. Office forms are a basic tool in the hands of administration as they-

- Specify space for writing particular information.
- Inform the user to communicate only restricted information.
- Help to generate multiple copies.
- Facilitate to secure repetitive information.
- Simplify office operations.
Forms have greatly cut administrative overheads. Earlier forms were filled only manually but now filling up of computer generated forms is widely used method of conveying information in an organization.

### 2.3 BENEFITS OF OFFICE FORMS

A properly designed office form is very advantageous for an organization as it goes a long way in reducing the voluminous work which would have been otherwise done, thereby increasing efficiency in office operations. Use of forms enjoy the following benefits:

a) **Saving of Time and Labour**: As forms make office procedures simple and easy, a lot of saving of time and labour take place.

b) **Less Chances of Errors**: As unnecessary details or information is not recorded, there are less chances of errors which may take place in office operations.

c) **Increase efficiency**: A lot of repetitive work is reduced thereby speeding up office work.

d) **Reduced Administrative Overheads**: As repetitive and routine work is performed efficiently with the use of office forms, there is considerable reduction in office costs.

f) **Helpful in Fixing Responsibility**: As the forms generally have space at the end for the ‘signatures’, they help to fix the responsibility of the person, if required.

f) **Expedite Office Work**: As forms are so designed that they provide space for giving restricted information, analysis and interpretation of information can be speedily done.

g) **Improve Work Systems and Procedures**: Use of Office Forms also help us to improve the office operations as the shortcoming in the design and layout of the forms can be easily viewed and noticed. Thus, they give an opportunity for improvement in work systems and procedures.

h) **Facilitates Storage of Information**: with the use of forms, it is easy to store and preserve information for future reference.

Office forms are tools to simplify office systems and procedures as more than sixty per cent of total administrative time is spent in the handling of office forms.

### 2.4 TYPES OF OFFICE FORMS

Depending on the kind of information to be communicated, there are various types of forms which one can use in an office. The following types of office forms are commonly used:

a) **Forms based on Functionality**: Application forms, Purchase form, Sales Form, Stores Requisition Form, Appraisal Form, Education Loan Form etc.

b) **Business Forms**: Such forms include invoices, vouchers, purchase orders, cash receipts etc.
c) Organizational Forms: These forms are designed specifically to meet the needs of day-to-day working in the organization. They facilitate the management and staff to communicate and provide information speedily. For example, leave application form, provident fund advance form, festival advance form, performance appraisal form, income tax calculation form etc.

d) Single Copy Form: This form is complete in all respects and is a source-document in itself.

e) Multiple Copies Form: This form is used when multiple copies of a form are necessary to be generated for the purpose of providing information.

f) Continuous Forms: Cash receipts, invoices, bills etc. are available in continuous stationery for automatic feeding. The use of such forms help in saving of time and energy which would have been used in inserting, removing and separating the sheets from the printer every time a print out is generated. It is also possible to have multiple copies of the form on continuous stationery.

g) Physical Forms: Forms which are printed on paper and are filled manually are known as physical forms. For example, to perform banking transactions, one normally fills-up required bank forms manually if present in bank.

h) Electronic Forms: Another way to eliminate paper is to automate paper-based processes that rely on forms to capture and share data. This method is referred to as ‘Enterprise Forms Automation’ and is typically accomplished by using existing print-perfect documents in electronic format to allow pre-filling of existing data, capturing data manually entered online by end-users, providing secure methods to submit form data to processing systems and digitally signing the electronic documents without printing.

The technologies that may be used with Enterprise Forms Automation include -

- Form Technology (e.g. Adobe PDF) - to create, display and interact with documents and forms.
- Enterprise Forms Automation Software - to integrate forms and form data with processing systems.
- Databases - used to capture data for prefilling and processing documents.
- Workflow Platforms - used to route information, documents and direct process flow.
- Digital Signature Solutions - used by end-users to digitally sign documents.
- Web Servers - used to host the process, receive submitted data, store documents and manage document.

One of the main issues that had kept companies earlier from adopting paperwork automation is capturing digital signatures in a cost-effective and compliant manner. The E-Sign Act of 2000 in the United States provided that a document cannot be rejected on the basis of an electronic signature and all companies must accept digital signatures on documents. Now, electronic generated forms are filled on-line in almost every field of office operations.

It is the duty of the Office Manager to introduce office forms, whenever required, to make the office operations effective. Great attention should be paid
while introducing office forms in terms of its content, sequence, design, shape, color, size, number of copies etc.

**2.5 EFFECTIVE FORM CONTROL SYSTEM**

As the office forms are introduced continuously in an organization due to change in the existing objectives, size, nature, work procedures etc. and expansion of office operations, a definite system exists in every organization to plan and execute the introduction of the forms. For this, there is need to systematically study entire objectives of using office forms. The basic objective which needs to be fulfilled while introducing a new form should be critically analyzed. Office Manager should not make a hasty decision while introducing a form. A newly introduced form should cut cost and improve efficiency of office operations.

While exercising control of office forms, the following points should be kept in mind:

- Regular review of existing forms to find out their suitability i.e. eliminate the obsolete and useless forms.
- Avoid misuse of forms.
- Put efforts on improving the existing forms.
- Definite procedure for introduction of new forms. Introduce only the justified forms as too many forms leads to confusion and expense.
- Ascertain absolute necessary desired quantity of forms.

A Office Manager must make judicious decision and introduce only absolute necessary forms. Blank side, if any, of an obsolete form can be used for preparing draft notes to avoid wastage.

**2.5.1 Steps for Introduction of a New Form**

For introduction of a new form, generally the following steps are adopted in an organization:

a) Cost factor and benefit to be accrued from the use of new form to be studied.

b) The requirements of a new form should be logically organized and a check-list of requirements prepared.

c) The check-list prepared to be arranged and analyzed in appropriate sequence.

d) Un-necessary entries deleted and additions, if any, inserted in the forms.

e) Proper sequence designed should have enough space for each entry.

f) Provision of adequate instructions so that there is no confusion and wastage of forms.

g) Provision of multiple copies, if required, to be taken care of.

h) Proposal of introduction of form along with a sample form submitted to the competent authority for approval.
Once the approval for introduction of new form is obtained, number of copies of the form may be printed to ease administrative works. Decision to eliminate an obsolete or useless form also needs approval of the competent authority. On many occasions, an existing form is re-arranged to fulfill the needs of a new form.

2.5.2 Designing of Office Forms

Effective designing of office forms is both a science and an art. Once the competent authority approves proposal to introduce a new form, its layout is prepared by the Office In-charge. A survey of existing forms is quite helpful in this direction. The following needs to be emphasized while designing of office forms:

- Ascertaining the purpose behind use of the form.
- Inclusion of name and address of the department generating the form.
- A self-explanatory form title.
- Adequate instructions, if required, for filling up the form.
- Logical inclusion of text or sequence of contents to bring natural flow of information.
- Ample space for filling up of information with adequate left, right, top and bottom margins.
- Number of copies required.
- Good quality stationery in case of physical handling.
- Size of form.
- Simplicity and innovation in designing of forms.
- Adequate attention on printing and color of paper, so that forms looks good in appearance in case to be used by external agencies.
- Retention period of forms.

It is important to keep all the above points in mind before the forms are given for printing. Any carelessness while designing of forms leads to heavy financial burden on the organization.

A specimen of form in connection with formalities regarding condemnation of Tools and Equipment is given below:

**Stores Department**

**List of Equipment Proposed to be Condemned**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Name of the item with specification</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Rate (Rs.)</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Store Ledger Folio No.</th>
<th>Name of Supplier</th>
<th>Date of Purchase</th>
<th>Reasons for condemnation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certified that the items listed above have been inspected, checked and found unserviceable and beyond economic repairs.

Signature of Technical Committee:
2.6 EFFECTIVE STOCK CONTROL SYSTEM

Stock Control, also called Inventory Control, means optimal procurement, care and disposition of stocks, regardless of whether it takes place in a manufacturing process or an administrative process. As stock control helps to prevent memory lapses and smooth running of the jobs in hand, a mechanism of developing the superior and weeding out the inferior stock has been established by every organization. For an effective stock control system, study of following factors is important:

- What is in hand?
- What has been consumed?
- What is to be ordered?

Importance of Stock Control System

An effective stock control system is important to have optimum stocks at all times and reducing costs. The basic objectives of stock control system are:

a) Reduction of carrying costs.

b) Maintenance of stocks in line with requirement thereby weeding out dead stock.

c) Carry out the business operations un-interrupted.

d) Improvement in stock turnover.

e) Improvement in reputation of organization.

f) Have access to the latest stock information.

For an effective stock control system, it is important to manage the information flow between the departments to assess the exact requirements. Planning and follow up of stock levels require consideration of following three important factors -

a) Planning: To plan accurate stock levels, an optimal order quantity is to be calculated to minimize expenses which are due to unnecessary stock held. It is extremely important to assess exact needs of the organization beforehand on the basis of past experience to plan accurate stock levels.

b) Replenishment: Once the plans are established, regular replenishment of stocks are ensured for smooth flow of work. Ideal stock levels should be maintained by regular order patterns.

c) Follow up: Regular review of existing stock levels helps to dispose-off obsolete stock and bring desired changes for effective and efficient running of the organization.

2.6.1 Automated Stock Control System

Office Automation has brought out automated control of stock with the help of development of various stock control software. Stock control software suites are
commonly used by business organizations to save time and energy in managing their stocks. Tailor-made software are also available, which help the individual organizations to achieve the following objectives for effective stock control:

- Management of stock levels in real-time.
- Help automated stock control and eliminate manual administration.
- Centralize control of stock.
- Have online stock control on remote locations.
- Generate stock utilization reports.
- Improve accuracy and quality of work.
- Automate ordering system to supplier by stock utilization.

Thus, to manage stock levels precisely and improve warehouse stock control, every organization should develop an effective system so that overstocks are avoided and minimum but adequate quantity of stock is always available in stores at all times.

Check Your Progress A

1. Fill up the following blanks:-
   a) A form is a ______________record which has space for entering information.
   b) Enterprise Forms Automation software integrate ______ and ______ with processing systems.
   c) Any carelessness while designing of forms leads to heavy __________ burden on the organization.
   d) __________________ software are available now-a-days, which help the individual organizations to achieve the objectives for effective stock control.
   e) A lot of manual repetitive work is ______ thereby ______ office work when using forms.

2. State whether each of the following statements are True or False.
   a) In forms, one needs to fill only detailed information.
   b) An obsolete form can be used to avoid wastage.
   c) Decision to eliminate an obsolete or useless form also need approval of competent authority.
   d) An effective stock control system is not necessary to have optimum stocks and reducing costs.
   e) Stock control software suites are commonly used by business organizations to save time and energy in managing their stocks.
PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF PURCHASING STATIONERY

Office stationery items are the essential tools to carry out office operations. It is unimaginable to think of an office without stationery items even in those organizations where every office work involves use of computers. They perform important roles in work place to carry out business operations smoothly in an efficient and effective manner.

Common types of stationery items used in an organization include:

- **Papers** – Every office revolves around paper. An office needs paper for conducting correspondence and taking notes. Various types and sizes of papers are required in an office. Letterheads, photocopier paper, printed invoices, notepads etc. available with every secretary to carry out office work.

- **Writing tools** – Pens, pencils, highlighters, markers, sketch pens, ribbon cartridges etc. are amongst the most required writing items in a workplace.

- **Files and Folders** – For an organized record management, an office needs files like box files, lever arch files, folders viz. presentation holders, magazine holders, document binders etc.

- **Diaries** – Maintenance of desk and appointment diaries are essential to prepare work schedules and remember important dates. Besides, Desk Calendars are available on almost every office table.

- **Calculators** – To perform speedy and accurate calculations, calculating machines are widely used in an office.

- **Other stationery items** like DVDs, pen drives, stapler, paper weight, scales, letter openers, scissors, glue, sticky slips, pen holders, paper trays, paper clips, awl pins, punching machine, dusters etc. are required for routine office work regularly.

Since office stationery items and office supplies are very important accessories for significant office operations, a Storekeeper needs to have complete knowledge of the following four principles for better utilization and management of same:

**Principle of Careful Handling**: As there are chances of stationery items getting dirty, dried-up, crumpled, discolored and deteriorated due to exposure of sunlight, heat, moisture, etc., it is important to handle carefully the items in proper cabinets, drawers, etc. in a proper storeroom.

**Principle of Good Housekeeping**: Orderly arrangement is very important to avoid breakage, theft and locate items easily. Visible marking of contents of stationery items in Store Room helps in easy location of items at the time of need. Cabinets, shelves, drawers etc. should indicate the item stored in the form of “marked slips”.

Sometimes, orders are placed just because Storekeeper is not able to locate an item, even though adequate stocks are present in Store room. Good housekeeping avoids all such problems and save an organization incurring unnecessary expenditure.

**Principle of Requisition and Use**: For optimal use, it is necessary that Storekeeper issue stationery items only on the request of written requisitions.
signed by authorized officials. It is also essential to devise a proper plan for issue of stationery, so that not much of the time is wasted in issue and receiving of stationery. Further, it helps to avoid wasteful use of stationery to some extent.

**Principle of Effective Stock Control System:** As stated, it is important to have minimum but adequate stock of stationery and office supplies always in stores for uninterrupted flow of office work. Regular review of stocks helps in disposition of old and obsolete items, using optimally the items alternatively (as stated above, using reverse side of obsolete items for preparation of draft correspondence) and maintain regular availability of stock.

Thus, a careful and systematic planning in handling of stationery and office supplies is essential to have proper quality and quantity of the items.

Further, as a large amount of money is spent in stationery and office supplies in an organization, it is the duty of the secretary or Office Manager to prepare budgets based on the past experience and allocate funds for the purchase of stationery. While devising plans for selecting and purchasing stationery, following factors should be borne in mind:

- Find out the purpose for which stationery is needed.
- Detailed specifications of each needed item.
- Quantity procured to be determined based on the past experience of consumption.
- Selection of reputed vendor. It is however beneficial to spend a little time looking into the best supplier for company’s particular needs. Price, delivery time, after sale service etc. are some important points to be taken care of in this regard.

In most of the offices, centralized system for purchase and management of stationery is preferred. The main benefits of centralized system include economical use of space and labor, better supervision, better utilization of stock and storage equipment etc.

Based on the budget allocated for the purchase of stationery, an order for purchase can be given on-line or through Purchase Department. Open tendering for purchase can also be done in case of large requirement of stationery. Before placing orders, it is a normal practice to procure quotations from various vendors and prepare a competitive statement. The vendor who supplies at the most competitive price according to specifications desired is selected for placing an order. The following four factors are to be kept in view while purchasing the stationery:

- Economy
- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Transparency

On the website, there are various software available which give guidelines regarding preparation of budgets for purchase of stationery. There are also websites of various vendors who supply stationery and office supplies at competitive rates by on-line ordering.
2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress A

1. Fill in the blanks:-
   a) structured
   b) forms, data
   c) financial
   d) tailor made
   e) reduced, speeding up

2. True and False:-
   a) False
   b) True
   c) True
   d) False
   e) True

2.9 LET US SUM UP

A form is a structured record which has space for entering information. It is a mode to receive, pass and store information. Forms are widely used every day in offices in recording and communicating information. They are the basic tool of office operations. Every form designed in office is unique in nature and is designed to receive restricted and exclusive information. Office forms are very important for office administration as they specify space for writing particular information, inform the user to communicate only restricted information, help to generate multiple copies, facilitate to secure repetitive information, simplify office operations. Use of forms enjoy the benefits viz. Saving of Time and Labour, Less Chances of Errors, Increased efficiency, Reduced administrative overheads, Better Coordination, Helpful in fixing responsibility, Expedite office work, Improve work systems and procedure, Facilitates storage etc. Various types of office forms commonly used include forms for office functions, business forms, organizational forms, single and multiple copy forms, continuous forms, physical and electronic forms. Electronic forms eliminate use of paper and is based on automate processes that rely on forms to capture and share data. This method is referred to as ‘Enterprise Forms Automation’ and is typically accomplished by using existing print-perfect documents in electronic format. While exercising control of office forms, the points to be kept in mind are: Regular review of existing forms to find out their suitability i.e. eliminate the obsolete and useless forms, Avoid misuse of forms, Put efforts on improving the existing forms, Definite procedure for introduction of new forms, Introduce only the justified forms as too many forms leads to confusion and expense and Ascertaining quantity of forms required.

For introduction of a new form, steps to be followed are (a) The requirements of new form should be logically organized, (b) Cost factor and benefit to be accrued from the use of form studied (c) A check-list of requirements is prepared, (d) The check-list in appropriate sequence analysed (d) Un-necessary entries deleted and additions, if any, inserted in the forms (e) Proper sequence designed keeping enough space for each entry (f) Provision of adequate instructions so that there is no wastage of forms (g) Multiple copies, if required, to be taken care of (h) Proposal of introduction of form along with a sample form submitted to the competent authority for approval.
Effective designing of office forms is both science and art. Once a competent authority approves the need to introduce a new form, its layout is prepared by the Office In-charge.

Stock Control, also called Inventory Control, means optimal procurement, care and disposition of stocks, regardless of whether it takes place in a manufacturing process or an administrative process. For an effective stock control system, it is important to manage the information flow between the departments to assess the exact requirements. Planning and follow up of stock levels require consideration of three important factors viz. planning, replenishment and follow up. Tailor-made software are available now-a-days, which help the organizations to achieve the objectives for effective stock control like Management of stock levels in real-time, Help automated stock control and eliminate manual administration, Centralize control of stock, Have on-line stock control on remote locations, Generate stock utilization reports, Improvement in accuracy and quality of work and Automated ordering system to supplier by stock utilization.

Office stationery items are the essential tools to carry out office operations. It is unimaginable to think of an office without stationery items even in those organizations where every office work involves use of computers. Great care and attention are needed as there are many possibilities of misuse and wastages in use, handling and control of stationery items by the employees in an office. A Storekeeper needs to have knowledge of the four principles for better utilization and management of the stationery items viz. Principle of Careful Handling, Principle of Good Housekeeping, Principle of Requisition and Use and Principle of Effective Stock Control System. Based on the budget allocated for the purchase of stationery, an order for purchase can be given on-line or through Purchase Department.

2.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Explain the various benefits of using Office Forms.
2. Describe any four types of Office Forms.
3. What do you understand by an Electronic Form? Discuss briefly the technologies used in Enterprise Form Automation.
4. What steps are followed in an organization to introduce a new Office Form?
5. Explain objectives of stock control.
6. Why modern organizations prefer Automated Stock Control System?
7. Describe the importance of proper requisition system for issue of stationery to office staff?
8. What points should be kept in mind while exercising control of Office Forms?
9. While devising plans for selecting and purchasing stationery, what factors should be borne in mind?
10. What are continuous forms? For what kinds of work can the use of continuous forms be justified?

2.11 REFERENCE BOOKS

1. Administrative Office Management by Dr. RK Chopra
2. Office Management by PK Ghosh
3. Secretarial Duties by John Harrison
4. Modern Office Management by Neuner and Lewis Keeling
UNIT 3 OFFICE EQUIPMENT AND MACHINES

Structure

3.0 Objectives

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3.2 Office Mechanization
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3.3 Equipment and Machines
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3.4 Safety and Security of Data

3.5 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.6 Let Us Sum Up

3.7 Terminal Questions

3.8 Reference Books

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- state the meaning of office mechanization;
- learn about the office equipments and machines in detail; and
- understand the safety and security of data.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As an office now attends to clients from all parts of globe, it has to keep pace with technological developments taking place in office operations. Today, a modern office has mechanized its routine and monotonous activities. Machines and equipment have become integral part of a modern office. Besides performing routine office functions, some machines are also used for safety and security of office operations and data. Various office equipment like computer, photocopier, binding machine, lamination machine, franking machine, CCTV etc. have become necessity for survival and growth of business houses.
3.2 OFFICE MECHANIZATION

A Secretary or an Office Assistant is appointed in an organization to perform usually routine office functions viz. mail handling, filing, communicating, making travel arrangements, arranging appointments, making calculations etc. Direct and indirect costs of keeping such staff are going up. Even after paying high salaries, it cannot be ensured that work performed by them is hundred per cent accurate or of standardized quality. Office mechanization is an effort to replace human labour by machine operation to carry out routine functions efficiently and effectively.

3.2.1 Meaning and Objectives

Office mechanization means use of machines and equipment in Office. It is defined as replacement of manual labor by machine operations.

With office mechanization, paper work in office has reduced to a considerable extent and a Paperless Office has become a reality.

Objectives of Office Mechanization

One of the major decisions an Office Manager has to take is regarding introduction of mechanization in office. He has to give careful thought and consideration as to when and what machines should be introduced in the office. While selecting office machines, he has to consider the main objectives for introduction of such machines. The objectives of office mechanization are:

i) To Save Labor: There is saving of labor as large volume of work can be handled by fewer employees.

ii) To Save Time: Machines work faster and give more output than what is manually possible. Thus, there is considerable saving of time.

iii) To Promote accuracy: As office machines minimize clerical errors, accuracy of work especially in accounting, computation, calculations etc. is another objective of office mechanization.

iv) To Ensure Neat and Clean work: Improved quality of work is one of the important objectives of office mechanization. Work produced with the help of machines is usually neat and uniform in appearance.

v) To Eliminate Monotony: The routine work which is of repetitive nature is generally monotonous and normally leads to boredom. Office machines help in relieving human labour of boredom.

vi) To Lessen Chances of Fraud: Machines like Cash Register, Cheque Writing Machine etc. help in minimization of frauds and misappropriation of funds to a great extent.

vii) To Ensure Better Control: Mechanization in office enables the management to exercise effective control over office operations. For example, the use of Time Recording Machine in office ensures better control over attendance of staff.

3.2.2 Importance

The decision to shift from manual operations to mechanization in an office is mainly governed by comparison of costs incurred and costs saved. Both these
costs should be compared carefully and weighed before taken decision to purchase a particular machine in office. Of course, introduction of machines do require a large amount of initial capital investment but in the long run, their use is advantageous for an organization. The following benefits prove importance of mechanization in an office:

1. **Higher Efficiency**: As the speed of work is greatly increased with the use of office machines, higher efficiency in work done can be achieved resulting in saving of a lot of time.

2. **Better Quality of Work**: The work performed with the help of machines is standardized, uniform, neat and clean as compared to manually performed jobs.

3. **Greater Accuracy**: Mechanization ensures greater accuracy of work produced. Clerical errors and frauds can be reduced considerably when Accounting Machines are used.

4. **Reduced Operating Costs**: Office Machines are labor and time saving devices. They save manual effort and increase productivity and thus lead to overall reduction in operating costs.

5. **Relieves Monotony**: The monotony of repetitive office work is reduced with the use of office machines.

6. **Better Service and Goodwill**: The use of office equipment results in improvement of office services. This helps in giving better services to customers and public, which enhances the prestige of an organization. For example, customers’ database can be stored in computer and used whenever required.

7. **Effective Control**: Mechanization enables management to exercise effective control over various office operations.

8. **Effect on Personnel**: Office Machines help to motivate employees of the organization and they finish their work on time.

9. **Specialization and Modernization**: Introduction of office machines is an indicator of modernization in office. When office employees work on same machines for a long period of time, they develop specialized skills which is quite helpful in performing office work.

### 3.2.3 Limitations

There are certain limitations in regard to mechanization of office services. These limitations are outlined below:

1. **Heavy investment**: Initial expenses of installation of office machines are too high for an office to invest. Small organizations cannot afford to privilege them as some machines are quite costly.

2. **High maintenance cost**: Machines require high operational and periodical maintenance which becomes quite expensive and additional cost to the organization. Sometimes, breakdown of machine may also cause considerable losses to an organization.

3. **Risk of Obsolescence**: Machines tend to become obsolete in quite a short period of time. Further, many-a-times, machines purchased for specialized jobs cannot be adopted for new or changed office methods.
4. **Change in Existing System**: Sometimes, introduction of office machines need change in overall office systems and procedures.

5. **Need for Trained Operators**: Some machines need well-trained and skilled operators. This puts extra financial burden on the organization.

6. **Staff’s Resistance**: Workers, sometimes, resist introduction of machines and do not cooperate in using machine optimally.

3. **Less Flexible**: Machines used for one office operation may not be fit to carry out other tasks of similar nature.

8. **Uneconomical**: Office Machines prove to be wasteful and uneconomical if these are not used up to their optimum capacity.

9. Other problems like noise, space, after sales service etc. are also limitations of office mechanization.

**3.2.4 Selection of Office Machines and Equipment**

As various types and models of machines are available now-a-days, selection of a suitable office machine is an important decision to be taken by an Office Manager. Even to perform a task, there are various options available. A good machine proves to be an asset for the office while a bad machine is a mere liability. While selecting office machines, an Office Manager has to be very vigilant and take the following factors in to account:

1. **Does the machine saves time?**
   
   As time is money, the machine selected should perform the job in lesser time than it is performed manually.

2. **Does the machine saves labour?**
   
   The machine selected should result in increased volume of work than handled by the existing staff and thus result in saving of cost of labour.

3. **Does the machine give accuracy?**
   
   The machine selected should produce accurate work and need minimal checking.

4. **Will the machine relieve monotony?**
   
   Machines selected should lessen boredom and monotony while performing office operations.

5. **Will the machine reduce the chances of fraud?**
   
   The use of office machine should reduce the chances of occurring frauds in office operations. Use of Cash Register, Time Recording Machines, Cheque Writer etc. are introduced in office with this particular objective in consideration.

6. **Does the office has sufficient space and facilities?**
   
   Introduction of office machines do need sufficient space and facilities for its operation. At the time of taking decision for purchase of same, it should be ensured that the office has enough space and all the facilities regarding installation of machine.
7. Does the office have skilled operators?

As there are chances of office machines becoming faulty or idle due to unavailability of skilled operators, an Office Manager should ensure that the machine is installed in office only when there is sufficient training given to people to operate it.

8. Is the machine easy to operate and versatile?

The machine selected should be easy to operate and versatile in nature. For example, a Photocopier can also be used as a scanner and printer when attached to CPU.

9. Does the supplier have good reputation?

As after-sales-service is very important factor while selection of office machines, it has to ensured that the supplier enjoys a good reputation in the market for providing product quality and after-sales-service to their clients.

While selection of office machines, it should be ensured that work performed on the machine should be of routine and repetitive nature. As far as possible, mobile and portable machines with latest styles should be selected so that they could be shifted easily in case of need.

### 3.3 OFFICE EQUIPMENT AND MACHINES

There is a large variety of machines one can find in offices; ranging from a conventional typewriter (rarely seen in offices today) to a sophisticated computer. Between these two extremes, a number of machines have come up to make office operations advanced and speedy. Due to advancement of technology, some of the commonly used machines in an office are Copying Machines, Accounting Machines, Calculating Machines, Communication Equipment, Computer, Printer, Mail Room Equipment, Office Security Systems, Miscellaneous Machines like Paper Shredder, Binding Machine, Lamination etc.

#### 3.3.1 Copying Machines

As it is common for an office to make multiple copies of a document, copying machines are very popular and widely used in offices.

Earlier Stencil Duplicator was the commonly used equipment for making multiple copies with the help of a stencil (generated on manual typewriter or dot matrix printer), but due to several models of copiers available now-a-days, the use of stencil duplicator is quite limited.

a) Photocopier

A Photocopier is a machine which makes copies of visual images quickly and cheaply. With the help of this machine, an exact photographic copy of the original is obtained. Photocopiers use a technology called xerography, a dry process using heat. Copiers can also use other output technologies such as ink jet, but xerography is standard for office copying. One can use Black and White or coloured photocopier of various sizes as per the requirement.

With the use of digital technology, a copier effectively consists of an integrated scanner and laser printer. Automatic image quality enhancement and the ability to “build jobs” (that is, to scan page images independently of the process of printing
them) are quite useful features of the photocopier. One of the great advantages of using networked digital photocopiers is that hard copies of documents can be scanned into device and forwarded to the appropriate department without the need of making another hard copy. The documents are then stored electronically and changes made are tracked. Employees can also scan copies of documents into the photocopier and send them directly to their computer.

Documents can also be scanned into photocopiers and sent via email directly from the device, by linking photocopier to an email server. With logins these emails can be sent from the user’s own email account. Email can be easily recognized by the person receiving it. It is also stored in the user’s sent items.

Many new photocopiers also incorporate faxing capabilities. It means that documents scanned into the device may be faxed directly, storing the data in the hard drive.

b) Scanner

In computing, a scanner is a device that optically scans images, printed text, handwriting, or an object and converts it to a digital image. The document is placed on a glass window for scanning. It can copy things onto computers. After that one can alter the things which have been copied.

Scanners today provide high quality in terms of resolution for both color and black and white documents.

Many photocopiers can work as printer and as well as scanner.

c) Fax

A FAX is an abbreviation for Facsimile. With fax system, it is possible to transmit electronically visual images over telephone lines from one fax machine to another fax machine instantly. It can send handwritten or printed matter like pictures, charts, diagrams etc. to different locations within or outside the country.

Fax machines are very convenient to transmit a correspondence speedily that cannot easily be sent through email.

3.3.2 Accounting Machines

The mechanization of accounting operations is becoming increasingly important in large organizations as they have to cope with enormous figure work and analyse various types of figures for different purposes within few minutes. Accuracy and speed are the main features of accounting machines.

Accounting Machines offer various advantages viz. legibility and tidiness of entries, checking of accuracy, printing of balances, cumulative totaling, preparation of payroll and pay slip etc.

Some of the commonly used Accounting Machines are :-

a) Book Keeping Machines

These machines help in posting entries in cash book, journal, ledgers, etc. and contribute greatly to office efficiency and economy in staffing. Calculations become a pleasure instead of monotonous work. Accounting Machines help in –

i) posting in ledger accounts, Cash Book or Journal.
Office Procedure-II

ii) preparation of payrolls, cash receipts, etc.

iii) transferring of amount from Cash Book/Journal to Ledger.

Firstly, the Cash Book, Journal or Ledger is laid flat on the machine. The carriage of the machine moves on rails as the posting progresses and all the debit and credit items are posted.

One machine can do work of many clerks and entries posted are neat, legible and accurate. Monotony and fatigue can be eliminated to a large extent with the use of such machines.

The main drawbacks of the machines are that the machine is expensive for small offices and cause too much dependence which may sometimes delay work. For using Accounting Machines, skilled and trained staff is required.

b) Cash Register

These machines record on paper-roll cash receipts. The customers in departmental stores need receipts and cash memos. The operator receives the amount, keeps it in shelves made below the machine and issues receipt or cash memo. The machine prints the amounts on rolled paper which is visible through a glass panel on the top of the machine. It automatically gives cumulative total of receipts and at the end of the day, the Manager can find out the total sales. The merits of the Cash Register include: (a) the record of cash receipts are neat, clean and accurate, (b) there is no chance of arithmetical errors, (c) any time, the total amount of sales can be known, (d) the chances of fraud are eliminated and (e) duplicate copy of receipt is not needed. The main drawbacks are: (a) correction of errors is difficult and (b) the receipts do not have complete details. In spite of these demerits, this machine is used widely in business houses and at collection counters of departmental stores, electricity bill collection centre, etc.

![Cash Register](image)

Fig. 3.1: Cash Register

c) Electronic Cheque Writer

This machine is used for writing, crossing or signing a cheque to prevent fraud by altering or erasing the figures of the amount or the data. Any alteration in the
cheque becomes impossible as the machine applies downward force and uses fibre of the cheque to give print. The machine helps where a large number of cheques have to be signed regularly.

d) Coin Sorting Machine

Coin Sorter is a machine which helps in sorting of coins of different denominations. There is a rectangular box with different trays having holes of different sizes. These trays are over one another. Coins of different denominations are put on the uppermost tray. With a mechanical force, trays are shaken. Coins are thus automatically sorted. It helps a Cashier who has to spend a lot of time and energy in sorting out of coins.

e) Rupee Counting Machine

This machine is commonly used in banks, jewellery shops, departmental stores etc. A bundle of rupee notes is put on the tray of the machine and air pressure is given at the open face of the bundle. Rupee starts getting segregated quickly and the total figure of the counted notes can be seen simultaneously on the display panel.
3.3.3 Calculating Machines

Calculating Machines save a lot of time and energy in making calculations of discounts and percentages, totaling payments, preparing trial balance, tallying wage payments etc. while preparing pay rolls, sales analysis, tax reports etc. The reports and documents which need a considerable amount of figure work can be handled easily and accurately. Calculating Machines are of listing or non-listing type. Listing Machines print record of calculations and also facilitate rectification of errors. Non-listing machines give result of calculations on a display panel.

3.3.4 Communication Equipment

a) Telephone

Telephone is the most convenient and widely used means of oral communication for having internal and external contacts in an organization. Telephone calls are classified according to area viz. Local call, STD (Subscriber Trunk Dialing) calls and ISD (International Subscriber Dialing) calls.

b) Mobile Phone

A mobile phone (also called Cell Phone or Hand Phone) is an electronic device used for full duplex two-way radio telecommunications over a cellular network known as Cell Sites. A key feature of this phone is that it enables seamless telephone calls possible even when the user is moving around wide areas. Mobile phones differ from cordless telephones which only offer telephone service within limited range through a single base station attached to a fixed land line, for example within a home or an office. Mobile phones that offer more advanced computing ability are referred to as smart phones. A mobile phone user can make and receive calls to and from public telephone networks which include other mobiles and fixed line phones across the world.

Mobile phones support many additional services and accessories, such as short or medium messaging service, internet access, gaming, blue-tooth, camera, , MP3 player, radio, infrared short range wireless communication etc.

c) EPABX System

The EPABX means Electronic Private Automatic Branch Exchange. It is an electronic exchange which is privately owned and automatic. This system connects office telephones with the public telephone network.

Earlier, PBX system was used to route incoming calls to the appropriate extension in an office and to share phone lines between extensions. Today, a wide range of services are offered by a EPABX system like:

- a single business number which can connect to all company employees and departments.
- answering of calls with a customized greeting.
- providing various options for transferring a call.
- distributing uniformly calls to a department among available employees through Automatic Call Distribution (ACD).
● keeping a caller on hold till someone is available to attend the call.
● playing music or customized message if callers are put on hold.
● recording of voice messages.
● allowing transfer of calls between extensions.
● conferencing of multiple incoming calls with employees’ extensions.
● availability of detailed call records, if required, at any time.

d) Dictating Machines (Dictaphone)

Dictating machines may be either mechanical or magnetic. They can record voice on wire or coated tape which can be removed from the machine after dictation and forwarded to the point of transcription. These machines are used to record messages or dictations when boss wants to dictate some matter and the secretary is not available.

e) Voice Answering Machine

Automated voice answering systems are used to take messages and provide automated information retrieval requests. They reduce operator’s error, improve customer service and allow call center employees to perform other tasks.

f) LCD Projector

Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) Projector is an ICT (Information and Communication Technology) device that displays information stored in computer such as multimedia, power point files, animation, motion video and other interactive contents on projection screen.

In business organizations, conferences, presentations and virtual meetings are facilitated using LCD Projectors.

g) Public Address System

A Public Address System (PA system) uses microphones, amplifier and loudspeakers to reinforce a sound source and distribute the sound throughout a venue or building.

PA systems with a larger number of speakers are widely used in institutional and commercial buildings for making announcements, give information to a specified group of people or declare states of emergency. Intercom systems, which are often used in offices, also have microphones in each room so that the office staff can reply to the central office.

h) Electronic Mail

Electronic Mail commonly called e-mail is a method of exchanging digital messages instantaneously across the internet with the help of e-mail address. E mail servers accept, forward and store messages. The cost of sending an e-mail is very negligible if we have 24 hour internet facility on computer. One e-mail message can be sent to multiple recipients almost at a cost of a single e-mail. Further, delivery of e-mail is almost guaranteed as losing of the mail in cyberspace is very rare.
Office Procedure-II

Storing and managing e-mails are very easy as no physical space is being used for record management.

Check Your Progress A

1. Fill up the following blanks:-
   a) Mechanization is replacement of ....................... labor by machine operations.
   b) The monotony of repetitive office work is ......................... with the use of office machines.
   c) ......................record on paper-roll cash receipts.
   d) The EPABX means .................................
   e) E-mail is a method of exchanging digital messages instantaneously across the ......................... with the help of e-mail address.

2. State whether each of the following statements are True or False:-
   a) Machines and equipment are the tools used due to the needs of efficiency and standardization of routine office operations.
   b) At the time of taking decision for purchase of an office equipment, consideration of enough space regarding its installation is not an important factor.
   c) With the use of digital technology, a Photocopier effectively consists of an integrated scanner and laser printer.
   d) For using Accounting Machines, skilled and trained staff is not required.
   e) Delivery of e-mail is almost guaranteed as losing of the mail in cyberspace is very rare.

3.3.5 Computer

A computer is the most commonly used machine in offices. A computer is a machine that can perform a variety of operations such as arithmetical calculations, comparison of data, storage of information, analysis of data and preparation of diagrams and charts etc. The main component of computer is the ‘memory’ unit. The input data and programmes are fed and remain available for reproduction. With the help of Word Processing programmes, one can compose letters, memos, reports etc. visible on screen, edit them, save them and print as often as needed. A document is given a file name and stored on disk or pen drive. High speed, flexibility and accuracy are main advantages of the computer. The main disadvantages include high initial and operating cost, need of trained staff and serious disorder in case of breakdowns.

Computer’s desktop environment is within physical limits. A Laptop is a small and light personal computer designed for mobile users. A laptop integrates most of the typical components of a desktop computer, including a display, a keyboard, a pointing device and often including a battery, into a single small and light unit. The
rechargeable battery is charged from an AC adapter and typically stores enough energy to run the laptop for three to five hours in its initial state, depending on the configuration and power management of the computer.

Due to websites availability on computers, companies are able to reach global markets. In business organisations, with the help of various software, computers are used for accounting, scheduling, inventory management, product designing, research, customer interaction, communication, e-mail, web conferencing, chatting etc.

3.3.6 Printer

A printer is a device which allows users to print text and graphics on the plain papers. A printer is a piece of hardware for a computer. It can also work with digital cameras to print directly without the use of a computer.

Inkjet Printers and Laser Printers are the most popular printer types for business use. Dot Matrix Printer are less popular now-a-days as they are slow and make a lot of noise while printing. Plotters are large format inkjet printers.

3.3.7 Office Security Systems

Safety and security of people, documents, property etc. is a matter of vital concern for every office. Some of the commonly used office security equipment are:

a) Video Security Systems (Close Circuit TV or PC Video Surveillance)

The systems are helpful to protect people and property around the clock. With the help of real time surveillance, one can track any suspected incident, employees’ movement, business frauds etc.

b) Metal Detector

A Metal Detector is a portable device which penetrates magnetically in order to find traces of metal. It helps in office buildings, schools, government agencies and prisons to ensure that no one is bringing a weapon onto the premises.

c) Smoke Detector

Smoke detectors identify smoke in the air and give warning of prospective fire with the help of a strong alarm in the vicinity or signal to a centralised warning system. These devices can even detect cigarette smoke alarms go off.

d) Paper Shredder

Paper Shredder is used to destroy confidential or sensitive documents when they are no longer required in offices. The machine shreds all these documents into strips or fine particles, since they may be used by thieves to commit fraud or identity theft. Paper shredders are also used for recycling purposes and waste reduction. Shredded paper can be used to create packing material.
Besides, Cash Security System, Visitor Counting Machine, Fire Extinguisher etc. also, often used by organizations as safety and security devices.

3.3.8 Mail Room Equipment

Various Mail Room Equipment used in modern organizations to carry out mailing operations efficiently and effectively have been discussed in Unit-5.

3.3.9 Miscellaneous Machines

In addition to office equipment discussed above, several other office machines commonly used include Time Recording Machines, Lamination Machines, Binding Machine, Display Boards etc. New types and models of office machines and equipment are continuously introduced in markets, which help in carrying out office operations in an advanced manner easily, speedily and accurately.

3.4 SAFETY AND SECURITY OF DATA

Data Warehousing and Data Encryption are two commonly used techniques to safeguard data from any possible misuse and loss.

Back up of all the important and useful data should be saved in Data Warehouses. Use of Data Warehouses save business organisations from huge data loss due to unforeseen circumstances viz. natural calamities, bomb blasts, accidents, mass data corruption etc.

Conversion of data into encrypted form while storing in the Data Warehouses ensures safety of data. If anyone wants to use the data, the data stored in encrypted form has to be first decrypted by using security password and a decoding algorithm. In this way, only the authorised staff have access to data. Thus, data encryption refers to transformation of plain text into coded form, a form that is non-readable to unauthorized parties.

3.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress A

1. Fill up the following blanks:-
   a) manual
   b) reduced
   c) Cash Register
   d) Electronic Automatic Private Branch Exchange
   e) internet

2. True & False:-
   a) True
3.6 LET US SUM UP

Mechanization may be defined as replacement of manual labour by machine operation. Main objectives of mechanization are: (1) saving of labour and cost (2) saving of time (3) ensuring accuracy (4) relieving monotony (5) improvement in quality (6) better control and (3) improvement in prestige for the organization. The limitations of mechanization include heavy investment, high running cost, risk of obsolescence, need of skilled operators, employees resistance etc. Commonly used office machines include photocopier, accounting machines, computer, printer, scanner, mail room equipment, fax, telephone, paper shredder, time recording clocks etc.

Copying Machines produce multiple copies of a letter. Office accounting services are handled by book-keeping machines, cash registers, calculating machines etc. Computer is an electronic machine which can perform all mathematical operations, record and store information and reproduce it at a very high speed. Printer and scanner are hardware connected with the computer.

Various machines are used in the Mailing Department to ensure speed and accuracy such as Letter Opener, Folding Machine, Sealing Machine, Mailing Scale, Stamping, Addressing and Franking Machine. Besides, there are some communication systems such as FAX, electronic mail, LCD Projector, telephone, mobile phone, PABX system, PA system etc. to facilitate rapid and effective communication. Some of the commonly used office security equipment are Burglar (or intrusion), fire and safety alarms, Video Security Systems (Close Circuit TV or PC Video Surveillance), Metal Detector, Smoke Detector, Cash Security System, Visitor Counting Machine, Fire Extinguisher, Paper Shredder etc.

Data Warehousing and Data Encryption are the two techniques used for security and safety of data from any possible misuse and loss.

3.7 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. What are the objectives of mechanization in offices?

2. Explain any four mechanical devices commonly used in the Accounts Section of an organization.

3. What are Calculating Machines? Describe their uses in a modern office.

4. Describe, in brief, the various types of copying machines used.

5. Explain the use of the following machines –
   a) Printer
   b) PA System
Office Procedure-II

c) EPAX

d) Computer

6. “While selecting office machines, an Office Manager has to be very vigilant and take care of certain factors” Discuss.

7. Discuss the techniques of safeguarding data.

8. Differentiate between Data Warehousing and Data Encryption?

3.8 REFERENCE BOOKS

1. Administrative Office Management by Dr. R. K. Chopra

2. Office Management by P. K. Ghosh

3. Secretarial Duties by John Harrison

4. Modern Office Management by Neuner and Lewis Keeling