



United Republic of Tanzania

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE  
PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT

# Registry Procedures Manual

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UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

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President's Office, Public Service Management  
Records and Archives Management Division

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## **Registry Procedures Manual**

*Records Management aims at ensuring that the right information is available  
to the right person, at the right time, and at the least possible cost.*

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## FORWARD TO THE 2001 EDITION OF THE REGISTRY PROCEDURES MANUAL

Today, it is an undenied fact that we are living in an information era where information is regarded as a key resource in all places, from homes to work places. It is estimated that 80% of office employees are information handlers. Thus, efficient and effective management of information underpin all areas of government and facilitate immeasurably to the success.

Documentary evidence provides the framework for accountability, which is the cornerstone of good governance. The Government of Tanzania, which has embarked on reforming its public service, seeks to improve the management of records through the Public Service. Records Management is, therefore, becoming an important instrument of management of change process upon which principles and practices of modern management depend. The success depends on the extent to which information and records are organized, stored and managed throughout their life cycle.

In order to ensure that there was a robust information service that formed the basis of an accountable administration, the Government of Tanzania initiated the Records Management Project in 1997. The Project has a number of successes. One of the tangible successes is production of a Registry Procedures Manual.

This manual has been developed in the wake of mapping current and emerging best practices and the introduction of a "Keyword" System where file headings reflect functions instead of hierarchical system in which file headings reflect themes; thus this manual supercedes the Standard Registry Procedures of 1984.

In conjunction with desk instructions for registry staff, this manual should therefore ensure a consistency of practice and sustainability of system's improvements. As records and information management develops further and systems are further enhanced, the guidance series will be altered to reflect these changes.

With a shared commitment to our common goal of an efficient and accountable government, I look forward to a strong relationship that benefits all citizens of Tanzania.

Joseph A. M. Rugumyambeto

*PERMANENT SECRETARY (ESTABLISHMENT)*

# Section 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 THE NEED FOR SOUND REGISTRY PROCEDURES

No government could survive without written records. Without them, all organised administration would quickly come to a halt. Because records are so important, they must be effectively managed at all stages of their existence from their creation to their eventual disposal. Responsibility for this rests primarily with the Records and Archives Management Division (RAMD)<sup>1</sup>, working closely with its clients - the users of the records. The effectiveness of this partnership will depend upon the degree of understanding and co-operation between them.

## 1.2 THE FUNCTIONS OF REGISTRY

The essential functions of a Registry are to:

- Receive, record and distribute incoming and internally created mail of all kinds (e.g. letters, memoranda, faxes), to attach relevant reference papers and to pass the correspondence to officers;
- Open, index, build up and control the files upon which users depend for information about the conduct of government business;
- Know the location of all officially registered files in their care and be able to produce them quickly, by means of effective indexing, classification and tracing procedures;
- Provide storage, repository and reference services for all officially registered files and other documentation in their care;
- Record and arrange for the efficient and timely despatch of all correspondence produced by the officers they serve;
- Review and dispose of all outdated files or other records in accordance with retention periods as agreed between Records and Archives Management Division (RAMD), the ministry or department concerned and other relevant officials.

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<sup>1</sup> This Manual describes the roles, responsibilities and relationships that will emerge following the passage of the National Records and Archives Act.



### 1.3 MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR REGISTRIES

Responsibility for the management of Registries is shared between the President's Office-Public Service Management (PSM) and Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). PO-PO-PSM is responsible for all professional and technical matters relating to the delivery of effective and efficient Registry services. Ministries are responsible for all matters regarding the welfare, discipline and non-specialist training of Registry staff. The separate responsibilities of these two management chains must be closely co-ordinated.

The Public Service Management is responsible for developing Registry policy and for introducing it in consultation with senior management in each of the ministries and departments served. This technical and professional management responsibility includes:

- Ensuring, in consultation with managers responsible for Registry staffing, that all Registry staff are adequately trained in the full range of Registry duties;
- Ensuring, also in consultation with line managers, that all Registries are fully staffed by suitable staff to approved complement levels;
- Giving advice and direction to all Registry staff on their duties; disciplinary matters will be referred to line managers;
- Making regular inspections of Registry services and making reports to local line managements; and
- Providing a source of advice and guidance on all aspects of the management of current records to Registry staff and Registry users.

Ministries are responsible to the Director of Records and Archives Management Division for the following aspects of the management of their individual Registries:

- Co-operating in providing all necessary technical and professional training for Registry staff;
- Monitoring the good discipline and standards of attendance by Registry staff and ensuring that absences are fully covered by suitable substitutes;
- Making provision for the welfare, career development and annual leave arrangements for all Registry staff; and
- Dealing with all non-specialist general administrative matters pertaining to Registries.

The head of the Registry has immediate responsibility for day-to-day control of the Registry. He/she must manage the staff, monitor and control the workflow and Registry systems to ensure an efficient service. He/she reports to the line manager responsible for the Registry on the performance of the Registry and on any problems where support is required. He/she liaises with DRAM through Director Administration and Personnel (DAP) of the responsible ministry on any technical records management or procedural matters.

#### **1.4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF REGISTRY STAFF TOWARDS USERS**

Registries exist in order to provide a service to the officers who need to use the records. Users are always shown the maximum possible courtesy and co-operation, and efficient Registry staff will take every opportunity to learn the particular needs and requirements of their agency. The Registry staff will react promptly to complaints by users. Suggestions for improvements from users are warmly received and actively encouraged and are implemented wherever possible.

#### **1.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF USERS**

Well-run Registries depend upon an active partnership between Registry staff and users. Registry staffs rely upon users to:

- Deal with files promptly and return them to the Registry when they are no longer required;
- Use the Bring-Up system when action on a file needs to be temporarily suspended;
- Keep files free of unnecessary material such as duplicates, drafts etc;
- Include the relevant file and letter reference on all outgoing correspondence;
- Give clear guidance on how they wish their mail to be indexed;
- Provide the Registry with a completed file movement slip whenever they pass a file to another officer or elsewhere other than the Registry; and
- Co-operate fully with all necessary record checks, including censuses and searches conducted by Registry staff.

## 1.6 THE REGISTRY AND THE LIFE CYCLE OF RECORDS

Registries are, for the most part, concerned with files, which are in active use. However, files usually go through a number of phases between their creation and their eventual destruction, or their transfer to the Records Centre or Archives Section of RAMD. The life cycle approach to records management is based on the idea that each file may be regarded as having a 'life', beginning with its creation (or 'birth') and ending with its destruction (or 'death'). The relatively small number of files that are permanently retained in RAMD may be regarded as having achieved a kind of 'immortality'.

Registries are concerned with files in the earlier 'operational' phases of their lives during which the files are used for the purposes for which they were created. It is important however that Registries know not only how and when to pass files on to subsequent stages of their life cycle but that they understand the significance of those stages.

The RAMD manages all phases of the life cycle in order to ensure that Tanzania's information requirements are met efficiently. In addition to its responsibilities for Registries, it manages the Interim Records Store and the Archives Section.

Records Centre provide a central storage and retrieval service for semi-current records. These are records which are no longer needed for day-to-day use, but which must be kept because they are used occasionally or because they have legal and financial value. These records are not available to the public; nor are they available to ministries or departments other than the ones that created them, or to the appropriate successor body in the case of a defunct ministry or department. Records Centre are a vital link between the Registries and the Archives Section. By making regular use of the Tanzania Interim Records Store or their own Ministry's semi-current storage location, Registry staff will be able to provide a valuable service to users. This will also achieve improvements in their own working conditions, as they will keep the Registries clear of files which are not needed for current work. The role of a Records Centre is described in greater detail in section 10.

The Archives Section of RAMD preserves records which are of permanent historical value to the nation. Once these records become 30 years old they are normally open to the public for purposes of research.

## Section 2 INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE

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### 2.1 TYPES OF CORRESPONDENCE

Registry staff must deal promptly and accurately with many different kinds of correspondence. Incoming correspondence may reach the Registry in a number of ways. Some will come through the mail, some by hand, and some by fax. There will also be differences in the way in which items are addressed. Some will be addressed to the ministry or department, some to individuals either by name or by title of office. Other items may be either inadequately or illegibly addressed. Some items will bear security or privacy markings, such as 'Confidential' or 'Personal'. Some mail may contain cheques, money or other valuable items, which will need to be carefully recorded and accounted for in the Registry.

### 2.2 OPENING MAIL

All mail received in the Registry, whether from the Post Office, or from other ministries or departments, must be opened as soon as it is received by a designated officer (normally the head of the Registry) in the presence of another officer. This protects the officers involved against accusations in the event of correspondence, or valuable or important enclosures, going astray. If there is only one officer in a Registry, arrangements must be made for an officer from elsewhere to be present when the mail is opened.

How the mail is opened is important. Envelopes are slit across the top. Wherever possible, envelopes are saved for re-use. Care must be taken to ensure the contents of letters are not damaged when the envelopes are slit. During the opening and date-stamping of the mail, all letters should be kept in a box file or other suitable container. Many enclosures are received loose from their covering documents. It is vital to attach such enclosures, but in so doing care must be taken not to damage cheques, certificates or similar items. In any event, all attachments must be noted on the covering document. This is particularly important when the enclosures are valuable or are personal paper.

Certificates, deeds and other legal documents require special care. It is useful, if possible, to place such documents in separate envelopes, noting the contents and the number of the file on the outside. These are recorded in a valuables register (see Section 2.4), stored in a safe place and cross-referenced on the file.

### 2.3 INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE REGISTER (FIG. 1) AND 'MAIL BOX'

After the mail has been opened and all enclosures accounted for, each letter must be registered in the Incoming Correspondence Register. All columns of the register must always be completed. The details to be entered initially are:

- (1) Date the letter was received;
- (2) Date on letter;
- (3) Reference on letter;
- (4) From whom the letter was received; and
- (5) Subject of the letter.

Incoming mail is placed in a 'mail box' or folder for preview by a senior officer in the ministry, usually the Principal Secretary or Director of Administration and Personnel. The number of letters sent for preview is marked on the cover of the file.

Where there is more than one preview of mail each day, correspondence delivered after the mail box has been dispatched should be held over and included in the subsequent batch, except for any that are marked 'urgent' which must be delivered immediately. In Registries receiving mail once a day only, it may still be necessary to have a second preview to deal with letters delivered by hand from other ministries or departments or from elsewhere.

When the mail box is returned to the Registry the documents are immediately placed on the appropriate files. If an appropriate file does not already exist, a new file must be opened. The procedures for opening new files are described in Section 4. Before the files are passed to the nominated officers (either direct to the appropriate action officer, or to a senior member of staff for distribution to action officers), a member of the Registry staff will note on the relevant file transit sheet (see Section 6.2) the name of the officer and the date of transit. At this time the following information will be recorded in the Incoming Correspondence Register:

- (6) Reference number of the file on which the letter was placed; and
- (7) Date the letter was filed and passed to the officer responsible, and initials of the officer's post.

The files must be passed to the relevant officers without delay.

INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE REGISTER						
(1) Date Received	(2) Date on Letter	(3) Reference on Letter	(4) From Whom	(5) Subject	(6) File Number	(7) Date Filled and Passed to Action Officer

FIGURE 1

## 2.4 MAIL CONTAINING VALUABLES

Letters containing, or likely to contain, cheques, money orders or other valuable items must be carefully safeguarded from the time they are received. Mail must always be opened promptly, wherever possible by officers working under direct supervision or in pairs. These pairs should be changed frequently.

A written record of all cheques and money orders received each day must be prepared (in addition to the Incoming Correspondence Register) and signed by the post opener(s) (see Figure 2). The following information is recorded in the Valuables Register by Registry staff:

- (1) Date received;
- (2) From whom;
- (3) To whom;
- (4) Whether by registered mail or by despatch, with register number where appropriate;
- (5) Amount;
- (6) Cheque or money order number;
- (7) Signature of receiving officer; and
- (8) Signature of Accounts Section officer.

Each sheet of the register must be serially numbered. Cash received is counted and noted in the register as well as on the accompanying document by the post-opener and a supervising officer. Any uncrossed cheques/postal orders are crossed. Erasure and pencil entries must not be made in the register. A wrong entry may only be cancelled by ruling it through and correcting it with a new entry that leaves the original entry legible. The post-opener and the supervising officer must initial all such alterations jointly.

The completed Valuables Register together with the cheques, money orders and other monetary items are taken to the Accounts Section where they are signed for in the final column (8) of the Register by an officer of the Accounts Section.

The Accounts Section is responsible for examining cheques and money orders to ensure that:

- The amount agrees with that on the remittance advice slip or other accompanying document;
- The amounts in words and figures agree;
- They are correctly completed as to date and payee; and
- They are signed (excluding postal and payable orders).

If the purpose for which a remittance was sent cannot be identified, it is included other valuable items. Action will be taken by the Accounts Section to obtain the necessary information.

In cases in which money apparently has been omitted or differs in amount from that stated on documents received by post, a note must be made on the document jointly by the post-opener and the supervising officer. The Accounts Section will need to advise the sender that the item has been omitted or the wrong payment has been received. The remittance may be banked in the meantime.

<b>VALUABLES REGISTER</b>							
Sheet No. _____							
(1) Date Received	(2) From Whom	(3) To Whom	(4) Register No. or by	(5) Amount	(6) Cheque or Money Order	(7) Signature of Receiving Officer	(8) Signature of Accounts Section Officer

NOTE: Entries must not be erased or obliterated. Mistakes must be corrected by ruling through.

**FIGURE 2**



