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**1. ORGANISATION OF GOVERNMENT****101 APPLICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION**

This chapter shall be read in conjunction with the relevant Sections of the Constitution and the Provincial Government Act.

Amendment No. 238/85

**102 SECRETARY TO CABINET**

Secretary to Cabinet is regarded as the Head of the Public Service.

Amendment No. 238/85

**103 ATTORNEY GENERAL**

1. The Attorney-General is the Government's legal adviser.
2. Requests for legal opinion should be made only by Responsible Officers or officials of the Ministry of the Public Service who are assigned to posts held by officers not below the rank of Chief Administrative Officer. The points on which opinions are sought should be set out either in the form of a draft for advice or comment or a succinct statement of the problem, with the questions to be answered. All letters, memoranda and minutes to the Attorney-General should be typed and a duplicate copy, together with a duplicate of any draft attached, should be supplied for retention by the Attorney-General.
3. When a legal opinion is sought from the Attorney-General care should be taken to provide the complete set of facts pertaining to the case, particularly where advice is sought regarding correspondence when copies of all relevant documents should be furnished. No opinion of a Law Officer may be quoted to a private person.
4. Instructions regarding Acts, Regulations, other outstanding legislation and legal notices are included in GO O 206.2.

Amendment No. 238/85

**104 PERMANENT SECRETARY/FINANCE**

The Permanent Secretary/Finance is the Government's Administrative adviser on all matters relating to public expenditure, revenue, financial policy and related economic development.

**105 RESPONSIBLE OFFICERS**

The administration of Offices/Ministries and the control and discipline of officials in them are the responsibility of Responsible Officers subject to the provisions of PSC Regulations and these General Orders and such special instructions as may be issued from time to time.

Amendment No. 238/85

**106 PROVINCIAL SECRETARIES**

1. Provincial Secretaries in relation of staff paid from salary sub-heads under their control are to be regarded as Responsible Officers for the purpose of these Orders. Provincial Seconded Officers constitute a team under the guidance and leadership of the Provincial Secretary for the discharge of Government functions in the Province in accordance with the Provincial Government Act. Provincial Secretaries may exercise disciplinary control over their team of seconded staff under delegated power conferred upon them under Section 116 (2) of the Constitution, and where appropriate with prior consultation with the parent Ministry's Responsible Officer. Provincial Administrations are responsible for overall control and execution of all Provincial Government Policies and programmes and particularly the co-ordination of development or provincial social and other infrastructures according to any instructions received from Provincial Executives, and are responsible to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Provincial Government.

2. The Provincial Secretary is the representative of the National Government in his Province and is responsible for the due performance of ceremonial functions and the offering of government hospitality within funds allocated for this purpose.

3. A Responsible Officer or a professional or administrative officer who proposes to visit a Province on business should give due notice to the Provincial Secretary with information as to his itinerary and nature of business. Wherever touring arrangements make it possible he should call on the Provincial Secretary or senior Administrative Officer at provincial headquarters and discuss the purpose of his visit. A Responsible Officer is responsible for ensuring that the Provincial Secretary is advised in advance of the visit of any officer of his Ministry who is proceeding to the Province on Ministerial business.

4. If a Provincial Secretary decides for good reason that a seconded officer based in his Province or a Ministerial touring officer should not visit a particular village, place, area or locality at any particular time he is empowered to instruct the person concerned to refrain from making such visit or visits and such instructions shall be complied with.

5. The Provincial Secretary shall make himself available if required during the occasions of the visit of the Chief Justice to hold sessions there. Any departure from this rule shall be on grounds of administrative reasons or when notice of the sessions is so short that the Provincial Secretary's administrative plans will be materially upset by compliance.

Amendment No. 238/85

**107 OFFICERS VISITING HONIARA**

Any Provincial Seconded Officer visiting Honiara shall report to the Responsible Officer of his parent Ministry. Administrative Officers shall report to the Permanent Secretary for the Public Service.

Amendment No. 238/85

**108 ABSENCE FROM HONIARA**

Responsible Officers must inform the Secretary to Cabinet in writing of any intended absence on duty from headquarters not less than 48 hours before their departure, stating -

- (a) the itinerary proposed;
- (b) the object of the tour;
- (c) the names of any other ministerial officers in whose company the tour is to be undertaken.

Amendment No. 238/85

**109 INTERVIEWS WITH THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL**

A Responsible Officer desiring an interview with the Governor General shall make application through the Private Secretary. In cases where the interview is sought in relation to a matter which has been the subject of correspondence the request shall be sent through the Secretary to Cabinet in order that the necessary papers may be submitted to the Governor General. Officers other than Responsible Officers should address their applications through their Responsible Officers to the Secretary to Cabinet giving their reasons for seeking the interview.

Amendment No. 283/85

**2 CONDUCT OF CORRESPONDENCE****201 COMMUNICATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL**

Unless the Governor-General otherwise initially directs all communications for the Governor-General must pass through the Office of the Prime Minister with the sanction of the Secretary to Cabinet. Those from officers other than Responsible Officers must be initially addressed through the Permanent Secretary for the Public Service, on financial or economic development matters through the Permanent Secretary (Finance) or the Permanent Secretary of Economic Planning respectively. Communications from the Chief Justice may however be addressed direct to the Governor-General.

Amendment No. 238/85

**202 CORRESPONDENCE TO THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER OR TO THE MINISTRY OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE**

1. Correspondence with the Ministry of the Public Service should be addressed as follows-

- (a) as personnel matters - to: The Permanent Secretary for the Public Service, for attention: Chief Administrative Officer/Management Service Division.
- (b) on establishment matters - to: The Permanent Secretary for the Public Service, for attention: Chief Administration Officer/Human Resource Planning Division.

2. Correspondence addressed to the Permanent Secretary, Prime Minister's Office or Permanent Secretary, Ministry of the Public Service by officers below the rank of Responsible Officer in their personal capacity should be sent through and be copied to the Responsible Officer.

3. In forwarding communications from other officers to the Permanent Secretary, Prime Minister's Office or Permanent Secretary, Ministry of the Public Service, Responsible Officers must invariably state their own opinions and recommendations.

Amendment No. 238/85

**203 CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE MINISTRY OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE**

Correspondence from the Ministry of the Public Service may be issued by schedule officers designated by the Permanent Secretary for the Public Service or by officers signing on his behalf. The named of the officer signing the letter should be typed below his signature.

Amendment No. 238/85

**204 VERBAL DIRECTIONS**

Verbal directions given by the Governor General or the Secretary to Cabinet should invariably be committed to writing by the recipient and forwarded to the Secretary to Cabinet for confirmation.

Amendment No. 238/85

**205 INTER-MINISTERIAL MATTERS**

1. Matters which affect more than one Ministry should be examined and decided Ministerially in the first instance unless they have a policy or political content which requires a Cabinet decision; in such case a joint expression of views should be submitted, or, where this is not possible, the separate views of the Responsible Officers concerned should be submitted.

2. Where matters concern several Ministries copies of correspondence should be sent to all Ministries concerned marked "for information" if no action is required.

3. Copies of all important correspondence with public bodies and individual members of the public resident in any particular province should be copied to the Provincial Secretary for that Province.

Amendment No. 238/85

**206 CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN OFFICES/MINISTRIES AND WITH THE MINISTRY OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE**

1. Correspondence between Offices/Ministries should normally be conducted by memorandum and should include -

- (a) reference to previous related correspondence, if applicable, by file reference and date;
- (b) the subject matter of the communication;
- (c) a succinct statement of the problem on which advice or decision is sought with the reasons for advocating a particular course of action: or alternatively giving clear decisions or advice with the reasons stated briefly if these are appropriate.

2. When the subject matter of communications relates to matters governed by Acts, Cabinet decisions, Regulations, Rules, Gazette Notices, General Orders, Financial Instructions or official circulars the appropriate references should be given. Where applicable the relevant sections of the Constitution should be quoted.

3. Letters and memoranda should be divided into numbered paragraphs, should deal with one subject only, and should be dated with the date of despatch.

4. Enclosures should be limited to self-contained documents such as reports, memoranda of a technical nature, draft project applications and proforma required for preparation of the annual estimates. Enclosures in a language other than English should, if possible, be accompanied by a translation.

5. Semi-official letters addressed by name may be used by Responsible Officers and officers holding posts normally filled by Chief Administrative Officers or above. These should be confined to matters of a confidential nature, or at the exploratory stage of a problem to facilitate formal consideration later.

Amendment No. 238/85

## 207 CORRESPONDENCE WITHIN OFFICES/MINISTRIES

1. Correspondence between officers within a Ministry or office should be limited to matters of sufficient gravity to necessitate consideration on paper rather than discussion or to require a written record of advice, decisions or rulings. Such correspondence should normally be by minute on the appropriate file.

2. A minute should be as concise as possible and should be typed or legibly written. It should refer to relevant correspondence or authorities such as General Orders, Solomon Islands Constitution, Public Service Commission Regulations, Legislation, Public Notices, etc., with references clearly indicated, summarizing briefly what decision, ruling or advice is ought and recommend a certain course of action with the reasons for the recommendation. Where this has to be conveyed by letter, memorandum or other form of communication a draft should invariably be submitted with the minute and the material in the draft should not be reproduced in the minute.

3. Within the Ministry of the Public Service, correspondence may be conducted by exchange of minutes on file where practicable but such correspondence must be conducted by memorandum when the subject matter is of common concern or when joint action is required or joint programmes are involved.

Amendment No. 238/85

## 209 CORRESPONDENCE WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS

1. Correspondence with other Governments is normally conducted by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, correspondence with the Overseas Development Administration concerning manpower, recruitment and UK funded development projects is conducted by the Ministry of the Public Service or the Ministry of Economic Planning as appropriate. Where letters on these issues have been addressed to Responsible Officers or professional offices by officers of the Overseas Development Administration or advisers the reply should be cleared with the ministry of the Public Service or the Ministry of Economic Planning as appropriate.

2. Demi-official communication seeking clarification about trade and comparable matters with other governments may be exchanged with the appropriate High Commission, copied to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Amendment No. 238/85

## 210 CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC

1. Correspondence received by public officers from public bodies, commercial enterprises or private individuals should be replied to promptly and courteously. A formal acknowledgement should be sent to each letter as soon as it is received unless it is possible to reply within seventy-two hours. An interim reply should be sent if a full reply is not expected to be made within a month. Further interim replies should be sent as requisite.

2. Copies of correspondence which has passed between Ministries or between members of the public and Ministries must not be communicated to any member of the public without the prior approval of the Responsible Officer who should if in any doubt, obtain the prior approval of the Secretary to Cabinet.

Amendment No. 238/85

#### **211 CONFIDENTIAL AND CLASSIFIED CORRESPONDENCE**

1. The custody of confidential and classified correspondence is the subject of General Security Instructions, vide Public Service Circular No. 48/84 of 29<sup>th</sup> November, 1984. All such correspondence must be kept under lock and key at all times when not being dealt with personally by the officer who has it in his custody.

2. All officers who have access to classified or confidential correspondence must sign on appointment and before final departure from the public service a declaration that they understand and are aware of the provisions of the Official Secrets Act. Permanent Secretary for the Public Service is responsible for ensuring that this is done.

3. Correspondence of a classified nature should be marked "classified" in red capitals ½" high at the top and foot of each page, and the envelope enclosing it should be marked "classified" in red ink and sealed at each end. This should be enclosed in a second cover which should not bear any external distinguishing features. The writer should use his discretion as to whether confidential or classified communications should be typewritten.

Amendment No. 238/85

#### **212 SIGNING OF LETTERS**

Letters, as opposed to memoranda, addressed to the Ministry of the Public Service by or between Responsible Officers, Provincial Secretaries and Deputy Provincial Secretaries should in all cases be signed by them personally unless this is impossible owing to absence or other unavoidable causes.

Amendment No. 238/85

#### **213 COMMUNICATIONS AFFECTING INDIVIDUAL OFFICERS**

No officer is permitted to take extracts or copies of minutes or correspondence for his own purpose unless such correspondence is expressly addressed to the officer personally.

#### **214 REPLIES TO OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE**

Reminders calling attention to unanswered correspondence should be used regularly. Telegrams should be used for this purpose as seldom as possible.

#### **215 CORRESPONDENCE TO BE CONDUCTED COURTEOUSLY**

All official and semi-official correspondence should be conducted in courteous terms and the use of extravagant, offensive or sarcastic language is not permitted.

**3 FILING AND RECORDS****301 UNIFORM SYSTEMS TO BE MAINTAINED**

Responsible Officers are responsible for the maintenance of efficient filing and record systems which should be uniform throughout each Ministry. The procedures prescribed in the Manual of Registry Procedures, 1981, and guidance embodied in the Registry Services Manual, 1981, are to be adhered to except where clearly impracticable.

Amendment No. 238/85

**302 PERSONAL FILES**

1. In addition to the confidential personal record to be maintained under GO C112 which carries the IN CONFIDENCE classification, Responsible Officers may maintain at their discretion an open personal file for the purpose of dealing with personal matters of a routine and non-confidential nature.

2. Matters of personal concern to officers or affecting any officer's private affairs, whether classified or not, must be treated discreetly at all times and as private between the individual officer and those officers whose duty it is to deal with such matters.

3. Whenever an officer is transferred from one Ministry to another it shall be the responsibility of the Responsible Officer to arrange for the transfer of his classified and open personal files to the officer's new Responsible Officer.

4. The Permanent Secretary for the Public Service shall maintain personal files for all public officers. The Accountant General shall maintain personal files for all public officers for accounting purposes. These files shall not be transferable.

Amendment No. 238/85

**303 MINISTERIAL CLASSIFIED FILES**

1. Ministerial classified policy files may only be obtained for examination by Divisional Heads with the express sanction of an officer holding a post normally filled by an officer of the grade of Chief Administrative Officer or above.

2. Where appropriate Divisional Heads may minute on Ministerial classified policy files. Such minutes shall be address to the title of the Responsible Officer and be signed in full with the minuting officer's designation.

Amendment No. 238/85

**4 MAIL PROCEDURES****401 OPENING OF MAIL**

Official mail addressed to officers by title (or name) shall be processed in accordance with the instructions in Chapter 4 of the Manual of Registry Procedures, 1981.

Amendment No. 238/85

**402 FRANKING OF ENVELOPES**

1. Letters, packets, or parcels should only be franked if their contents are confined solely to official matters.

2. Franking of postal packets by public officers is limited to the officers defined in Regulation 122(2) of the Post Office Regulations, 1971.

**5. TELEPHONE SERVICES****501 USE OF TELEPHONE SERVICES**

1. Minimum use should be made of telephones for inter-island communications and the use of radio telephones should be restricted to urgent business. When a decision or advice is conveyed by telephone this should be recorded on the appropriate file with the date, time and participants in the conversation.

2. Telephones should be used as economically and discreetly as possible and discussion on issues of a sensitive or confidential nature should be avoided.

Amendment No. 238/85

**6. TELEGRAPHIC SERVICES****601 TELEGRAMS**

1. Official telegrams shall be approved only by Responsible Officers or officers authorised to do so by them. They should be as concise as possible and confined to matters of urgency where the subject matter is of such importance that it cannot be dealt with by mail without causing loss or serious inconvenience to the Public Service. Airmail post should be used where possible instead of telegrams.

2. Telegraphic replies to inquiries from members of the public may only be sent if the reply has been prepaid or is in the public interest.

3. Telegrams sent on the private and personal business of any officer, or by any officer on behalf of a member of the public, must be fully prepaid. Any breach of this Order will render the officer liable to disciplinary action and to meet the cost of the telegram. Responsible Officers are required to ensure whether any telegram to be sent is official or private.

4. Overseas telegrams and telexes to Foreign Governments may only be issued with the approval of Responsible Officers.

Amendment No. 238/85

**7 LEGAL PROCEDURES****701 PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS**

Approval must be sought and obtained from the Secretary to Cabinet before any Ministerial minutes, memoranda, letters or any other correspondence of a classified or confidential nature are produced as evidence in legal proceedings.

Amendment No. 238/85

**702 DRAFTING OF LEGISLATION**

1. A Responsible Officer who is contemplating new or amending legislation, whether main or subsidiary, should first ascertain from the Attorney General whether the proposals are already covered by existing legislation and the relative suitability of alternative precedents.

2. The Responsible Officer shall then present through his Minister to Cabinet memorandum setting out briefly the main provisions of the legislation and the objects it is designed to achieve, ensuring that any financial and social implications of the proposed legislation have been studied and are acceptable, and that interested Ministries have been consulted and are in broad agreement with the proposals.

3. When the proposed legislation is approved by the Cabinet, detailed instructions should be forwarded to the Attorney General's Chambers for legal drafting as a Bill for presentation to Parliament. After the approval of Parliament, the Attorney General shall arrange for its eventual publication.

Amendment No. 238/85

**8 SOLOMON ISLANDS GAZETTE****801 PREPARATION OF MATERIAL**

1. Matter for publication in the Gazette, which is published fortnightly on Fridays should be sent to the Secretary to Cabinet as it becomes available, and not later than the Friday preceding publication; the Responsible Officer will clear with the Attorney General's Chambers and pass to the Government Printer before the close of work on the Monday.

2. All material which will appear in the Supplement to the Gazette should be cleared by the Attorney General unless there is a clear precedent already approved by him which can be used as a model.

Amendment No. 238/85

**802 DUTY OF OFFICERS TO BE ACQUAINTED WITH THE GAZETTE**

All officers are required to acquaint themselves with the contents of the Gazette, Acts and Legal Supplements to the Gazette. The publication of any matter therein is regarded as sufficient notification to the Public Service.

Amendment No. 238/85

**9 REPORTS AND RETURNS****901 ANNUAL REPORTS**

1. Ministerial and Provincial annual reports should be furnished to the Secretary to Cabinet as soon as possible in the year following that to which they relate and not later than any date prescribed by the Secretary to Cabinet.
2. Reports should be submitted according to any particular format required by the Secretary to Cabinet and should be set out by chapters in consecutively numbered paragraphs.
3. When comparative tables are given they should if possible cover a period of five years including the year under review.
4. Reports should be confine to a clear, objective and concise account of the activities of the Ministry or Province during the year under review. They should not contain complaints, criticism or recommendations for action, nor praise or criticism of individuals.

Amendment No. 238/85