

“YEAR OF SUSTAINED AND DISCIPLINED WORK”

PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY

CIRCULAR NO. 10/89

REFERENCE NO. PS: 16/0/1^{II}

FROM: Permanent Secretary,
Public Service Ministry

TO: All Permanent Secretaries,
Heads of Departments and
Regional Executive Officers

SUBJECT:

Use of Reference Numbers on Official
Correspondence.

DATE: 1989-03-20

From time to time, the Public Service Ministry has sought by various publications / circulars and letters to improve the standard of our official correspondence. However, with

- The passage of time
- The mobility of trained staff
- The absence of a continued training / orientation programme for new staff
- Gaps in the training of new staff
- Hoarding of publications / circulars by senior and other officials and a refusal to share the contents with those who need to know,

Some useful and well-justified rules / practices are being ignored.

2. One of these is:

The practice of using reference numbers on correspondence

Very often letters / memoranda are received from Ministries without any reference

- (a) To the date of previous correspondence from the agency to which they are writing.
- (b) To the reference Number of correspondence to which your letter / memo is referring.
- (c) To the subject matter.

3. The results are:

- (a) Filing and retrieval of information are very time consuming
- (b) There is a build up in registries of unfiled correspondence
- (c) Acknowledgement of correspondence is delayed
- (d) The efficiency of the particular registry and ultimately the Ministry is reduced.

4. I therefore wish to remind you of the need to ensure that in correspondence with your colleagues and other officials, the correct procedure is adopted, and in this respect, I quote hereunder Chapter VIII G 9 of the Manual of Office Instructions

“The letter should identify previous correspondence to enable the recipient to locate his previous correspondence quickly. The first paragraph should include the date and the number of the incoming letter and a brief reference to the subject matter. If the letter is in reply to a telephone call or visit, a reference to the date of the call or visit and the person by whom it was made should be included.”

Appropriate beginnings are as follows:

“In your letter No. AC 2/4 of the 24th February concerning the conditions under which officers may apply for Special Leave _____”

“In your telephone conversation (Jones / Singh) of 24th February concerning the supply of newspapers to Guyana Missions Overseas _____”

5. In addition to the above procedure, it would be helpful to the recipient of your letter, if you showed your own reference number on your correspondence, so that this may be quoted in the reply. In short, correspondence should have reference numbers

“My reference No: _____”

“Your reference No: _____”

The return to these practices would make a big difference to the efficiency of our Registries.

6. I should be grateful if you would bring the contents of this circular to the attention of all staff in your organization.

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J.E. Sinclair,
Permanent Secretary,
Public Service Ministry.