



# 31

## MAJOR OFFICE ACTIVITIES

In the previous lesson, you have learnt about the various functions of an office and their significance, and the relevant departments in a modern office. You will recall that collecting, processing, analysing and presenting information constitute the key functions of an office. Mail happens to be an important part of information handling. Hence, for every one seeking employment in an office has to be fully conversant with the nature and type of mail and the process of handling it in terms of its receiving, sorting, marking, filing, indexing etc. including the use of machines and equipment. In this lesson, you will learn about various stages involved in handling the incoming and outgoing mail in an office, and its filing and indexing systems. You will also have an idea about the various types of machines and equipment used in the office.



### OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- define the term mail;
- explain the stages of handling incoming and outgoing mails;
- explain the meaning, objectives and functions of filing system;
- describe the bases of classification of files and different methods of filing;
- explain the meaning, purpose and types of indexing systems;
- state the objectives of office mechanisation;
- describe the uses of various types of office equipment and machines; and
- enumerate the general aspects of handling the office machines and equipment.

### 31.1 MAIL

‘Mail’ refers to the written communication that passes through the messenger service or the post office. Every business concern sends out and receives a large number of letters,



notices, circulars, telegrams, memoranda reports, statements, pamphlets, inquiries, etc. Mail service ensures continuous interaction between insiders as well as between the organisation and outsiders. It helps the firm in establishing and maintaining contact with customers, suppliers, and others concerned.

In order to ensure prompt and efficient handling of mail, the mailing service should be planned and organised properly. Due to its importance and the vital role played in the organisation, mail should receive special attention and treatment. Handling of mail is, therefore, done by a specialised department named as 'Mailing Department'. The nature of organisation of the mailing department depends on the size of the firm and the volume of mail to be handled. Mails consist of three main types- (a) incoming, (b) outgoing, and (c) inter departmental.

### 31.1.1 HANDLING INCOMING MAIL

Efficient handling of mail requires establishment of definite procedures involving step by step handling of mail. The incoming mail should be received and distributed with speed and accuracy. The exact method of handling inward mail differs from office to office. Handling of incoming mail generally consists of the following steps.

- (a) **Receiving the mail:** The mail is delivered once or twice a day by the postman or by messenger. If a post box or post bag is hired, the mail is collected by an employee from post office once or twice a day. A clerk is assigned the work of receiving letters and issuing receipts or acknowledging receipt in peon/ messenger book.
- (b) **Opening the mail:** Letters are opened by hand or by a letter-opening machine. The mail should be opened carefully to ensure safety of mail. It must also be seen that no papers are left inside the envelope. A responsible officer should supervise this process.
- (c) **Scrutiny of contents:** The contents of the envelopes should be scrutinised to find out the purpose of the correspondence and the department concerned. If there are enclosures, they should be checked to verify that they are in order. Any discrepancy should be brought to the notice of the mail room supervisor specially when the enclosures are cheques, drafts, postal orders, etc.
- (d) **Date stamping:** After opening the mail, each letter should be stamped with the date and time of its receipt. Stamping may be done with rubber stamp, by hand or with the help of dating, numbering and time recording machines. If necessary, the envelope must be pinned as evidence. The letter is marked to the concerned department and a circulation slip is also attached, if required.
- (e) **Recording:** The particulars of letters received are recorded in 'Inwards Mail Register' or 'Letters Received Book'. It ensures that letters do not get lost or remain unattended. But it is time-consuming if the mail is large. In such a situation, a 'Mail Room List' of documents delivered in a batch to a particular department or individual is prepared.



Alternatively, 'Mail Room Schedule' indicating the departments handling them is prepared, provided central filing is in operation.

- (f) **Sorting and distribution:** Letters are sorted out in trays or baskets or pigeon hole cabinets and delivered to the respective departments. Receiving clerk signs the list or register as an acknowledgement of receipt.

### 31.1.2 HANDLING OUTWARD MAIL

Almost every office sends out mail daily. Outward mail must be handled with care, speed and accuracy due to the following reasons:

- improper handling of outward mail creates bad impression on outsiders.
- delays in sending replies may result in loss of business opportunities.
- delay may result in additional cost, for example, a telegram may have to be sent if a letter has been delayed.

All outgoing mail passes through three stages: (a) production, (b) signature and control, and (c) referencing. Production involves drafting or dictation and typing (or transcription) of the draft or dictated matter. Routine letters may be signed by the junior staff on behalf of the head but important letters are signed by the concerned officer or head. Proper control on signatures is a must; only authorised person should sign the letters. Thereafter, every letter has to be marked at the top with code or file number for future reference. This is known as referencing. Each organisation follows its own method of coding and referencing, e.g. reference number ACC/148/1998 indicates that letter No.148 relates to Accounts Department (Acc.) and it was sent in 1998.

Handling outward mail generally involves the following steps:

- (a) **Collection of outgoing mail:** Generally, each department sends its correspondence to the mailing department for despatch. In certain offices a messenger from mailing section goes round at scheduled intervals to collect mail from different departments. A tray marked as 'outgoing mail' is kept in each department. All letters to be sent outside are placed in this tray and the messenger collects the mail from such trays. Timely collection of outgoing mail improves the efficiency of despatch section.
- (b) **Entering the mail:** All letters sent outside are to be recorded. The letters which are to be delivered locally through a messenger or peon are recorded in "Messenger Book" or "Peon Book". Outstation letters are entered in 'Outward Mail Register' or 'Despatch Register'.
- (c) **Folding of letters:** The letter (attached with enclosures) should be folded carefully and in the correct size. Creases should be straight and should not spoil the neatness of letters. They should be folded with minimum number of folds. If window envelopes are used, the folding should be done in such a way that the address becomes visible



through the window. Standard envelopes should be used to accommodate the letters. Before the letters are inserted in the envelopes, care should be taken for:

- i. writing the number of letter on the envelope and on the letter itself as recorded in despatch register.
- ii. checking the enclosures as mentioned at the left hand bottom of the letter, and
- iii. fastening the enclosures by the main letter with pins, tags, clips or stapling wires.

It may be noted that, of late, machines are being used for folding letters and inserting them in the envelopes automatically.

- (d) **Preparation of envelopes:** After folding, the letters are inserted in the right envelopes. A complete and correct address must be written. Pin codes should be given as they ensure a prompt delivery of letters. Address written on the letter and on the envelope should tally. Window envelope can be used to avoid rewriting of address on envelope. Address must be fully visible whether written by hand or typed. Addressing machines may be used whenever necessary. The envelopes should be sealed with gum, adhesive or cellotape. This work is tedious but should be done with care. The adhesive should not spread inside as it may spoil the content. Different categories of mail, like 'Book Post', 'Registered Parcel' etc. should be stamped or written as per regulations of the post office.
- (e) **Sorting, weighing and stamping:** The envelopes of different categories of mail are to be sorted out categorywise. The outward mail generally are of two categories — **Local:** to be sent through messenger, and **Outstation:** to be sent through post office, courier, airlines. The second category may be further classified as mail to be sent by ordinary post, registered post, speed post, book post, foreign mail, under certificate of posting, parcels to sent through Indian Airlines, Air India, Sea mail, etc. The sorted mail should be put in separate trays so that the task of stamping is facilitated.

Stamps are to be affixed on mail which is sent by post. It is necessary to weigh the different articles to be sent by post so that proper value of stamps are affixed. An up-to-date copy of the 'Post Office Guide' should be kept with the despatch clerk responsible for affixing stamps. In large organisations franking machines are used for stamping.

The letters which are to be sent by messenger are entered in the Messenger or Peon Book and handed over to the messenger for delivery.

- (f) **Despatching:** Finally, the posting and delivery of letters have to be arranged. Ordinary mail is posted at the nearest Post Box at regular intervals. Special kinds of mail like registered and insured articles etc. are separately sent to the post office. Letters to be sent by speed post are to be presented at the counter of a post office meant for it.



### **31.1.3 HANDLING INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MAIL**

In big organisations, all inter-departmental mails are handled almost in the same way as described above. A separate register may be maintained for inter-departmental mails. But in small organisations, these may be handled simply in mentioning peon book or messenger books.

### **31.1.4 HANDLING E-MAIL**

Electronic mail popularly known as E-mail is the fastest and most convenient mode of sending message, data, graphics etc. through internet. You know that internet is a network of computers all over the world connected through satellite. To receive and send mails through internet you need to have an e-mail address. In offices the e-mails are generally received and sent by the concerned officer. In case of senior officers this task is entrusted to their personal assistant or personal secretary.

While sending the e-mails, one must be very careful because it is not possible to rectify the original message once it is forwarded. Another important aspect is, a hard copy of the message must be preserved in the file as a proof.



#### **INTEXT QUESTIONS 31A**

1. What are the different categories of Outward mails?
  - (a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Give one word substitute of the following. Write your answer in the box given against each statement.
  - (a) Opening of letters to find out the purpose of the correspondence and the department it relates.
  - (b) Putting the letters in tray or pigeon hole cabinets.
  - (c) Inward mail register records the particulars of letter received.
  - (d) Mail received through internet.
  - (e) Mentioning the file number on the top of the letter for future reference.



## 31.2 FILING SYSTEM

As a primary source of information, all office records need to be preserved for future reference. Filing serves the purpose of preserving records in all offices. Documents and papers are filed and made available on requirement. **Filing** is the process of organising the correspondence and records in a proper sequence so that they can be easily located. **The term filing may be defined as the process of arranging and storing original records or copies of them, so that they can be readily located when required.** It involves placing of documents and papers in acceptable containers according to some predetermined arrangement so that any document may be located quickly and conveniently when required.

### 31.2.1 OBJECTIVES OF FILING

The major objectives of filing process are to ensure proper arrangement, careful storing and easy availability of records. An efficient filing system is expected to have the following objectives:

- (a) To classify and arrange records properly.
- (b) To protect documents against possible loss or damage.
- (c) To provide a method of obtaining information without loss of time.
- (d) To enable past records to be made easily available to management for framing business policies and future plans.

### 31.2.2 FUNCTIONS OF FILING SYSTEM

The functions of a filing system are as follows:

- (a) Classification of documents on a pre-determined basis.
- (b) Filing of letters and other documents after action taken in cardboard file covers or folders.
- (c) Preservation of file covers or folders in cabinets fitted with drawers.
- (d) Issue of files on requisition by any department.
- (e) Transfer of papers no longer in current use from the existing files to separate folders or box files at regular intervals for possible future use.
- (f) Disposal of old papers and records when these are no longer useful.

### 31.2.3 CLASSIFICATION OF FILING

Classification of documents is necessary to ensure prompt availability of records. Classification is the process of selecting headings under which records and documents are



grouped on the basis of common characteristics before filing. For example, letters may be classified on the basis of the subject of correspondence. The main systems of classification of files in an office are:

- (a) Alphabetical
  - (b) Numerical
  - (c) Geographical
  - (d) Subject-wise
- (a) **Alphabetical classification:** According to alphabetical classification, letters from different parties or relating to various subjects are arranged and put in different file covers on the basis of the first alphabet with which the name of the party or subject begins. The first alphabet of the name or surname or the subject is the preliminary guide to the position of the file. For example, all papers pertaining to Atma Ram & Sons may be filed in a folder marked 'A' or 'At'. Within each file, papers are arranged date-wise.
- (b) **Numerical classification:** Under this system, files are arranged numerically, each correspondence or subject being allotted a number. The files are placed in a numerical order in the drawers. For example, a customer, D.K. Sharma, may be allotted No.25 so that all papers relating to him may be found in folder no. 25.
- (c) **Geographical classification:** In the geographical classification method, correspondence is classified according to geographical areas, regions or states. Files may be marked zone-wise i.e. North, South, East or West, or State-wise, or City-wise. All correspondence relating to a particular area are kept in one file. These files may then be arranged alphabetically like Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa etc.
- (d) **Subject classification:** Under this system, papers are grouped according to the subject. The subjects are filed in alphabetical order e.g., Accounts, Audit, Bills, Bonus etc. This method is particularly suitable when the subject is of greater importance than the name or location of the correspondent.

### 31.2.4 METHODS OF FILING

After making classification, files must be preserved carefully by using any suitable methods of filing. There are various methods of filing based on the type of equipment they use. These methods can be classified as: (a) Traditional Methods; and (b) Modern Methods

- (1) **Traditional Methods of Filing:** There are some traditional methods of filing like spike filing, folder filing, pigeon hole filing, box filing, guard book filing, and arch lever filing. Although these methods of filing have limited use now a days, but these are suitable for small organisations. These methods are briefly described here.





- (a) **Spike Filing:** A thick steel wire with one sharp end and a wooden, plastic or steel round at the other end is used for filing. It is kept on the table or hung against the wall after filing is done.
  - (b) **Folder Filing:** There are covers of cardboard or thick paper fitted with metal hinges for fastening the papers together. A separate folder is allotted to each customer. All the letters relating to that customer are kept in the file date-wise. The papers are punched and then inserted. The papers lie flat one above the other.
  - (c) **Pigeon hole Filing:** It is a special almirah or cupboard divided into number of small compartments. It is open from one side and the compartments are square holes called 'pigeon holes'. Each pigeon hole bears a letter of the alphabet. When letters are received they are sorted according to the alphabet or subjectwise.
  - (d) **Box Filing:** Box file, as the name suggests, is made in the shape of boxes. Quite often papers are first put into folders and then they are placed in box file. It helps to preserve papers better as they are safe and gather less dirt. For classification purposes, papers relating to different subjects can be folded. This method is useful for travelling agents and where correspondence is stored temporarily.
  - (e) **Guard Book Filing:** Under this method, the paper or vouchers are pasted in bound book date-wise. This method is often used for recording minutes and preserving receipts and vouchers. It avoids the possibility of loss or misplacement of any paper.
  - (f) **Arch Lever Filing:** This system uses strong cardboard folders containing strong metal arches. These arches can be operated by a lever. When a paper is to be filed, it is punched with two holes with punching machine. The lever is then moved upward which opens up the metal arches or springs. After paper is inserted through the holes the lever is pressed down to close the spring. The paper in the file lie flat one upon the other.
- (2) **Modern Methods of Filing:** In addition to the traditional methods of filing as mentioned above, you will find some modern methods of filing which are very much popular now a days in both big and small organisations. The modern methods of filing are classified as (a) Horizontal Filing; (b) Vertical Filing.
- (a) **Horizontal Filing:** In this system papers are kept in file covers or folders one upon the other in horizontal position. The papers are kept in chronological order inside cardboard file covers. The papers are held together by metal hinges or levers. The files are then kept in cupboards in a horizontal position one above the other. When any paper is required, the relevant file is taken out and after use it is put back in the same position.





- (b) **Vertical Filing:** This is the most modern method of filing. In this method papers are placed in files and kept in an upright, standing position. The folders are stored in specially designed cabinets. The front side of the folder is slightly shorter. The extended part of the back is used to indicate the code number of the file. The drawers of the steel cabinet are deep enough to hold the folders in vertical position. In order to divide the drawer into convenient sections guide cards are placed at appropriate places. Under this method, a separate folder is provided for each customer or subject. The folders may be arranged alphabetically, numerically, geographically or subject-- wise. This system has become very popular in large offices and big business houses.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 31B

1. What is meant by pigeon hole filing?

---

---

2. Name the following system of classification or methods of filing.

- (a) Letters are arranged on the basis of first alphabet of the party.
- (b) Letters are classified according to region.
- (c) Letters are grouped according to subject.
- (d) Papers or vouchers are pasted in bound book.
- (e) Papers are kept in files one upon the other.

### 31.3 INDEXING

Index is something that 'points out' or 'indicates'. So, 'indexing' is a method of providing indicators for a body of data or collection of records. For example, the list of contents of a book is an index which assists the reader to locate pages on which various topics have been discussed.

Indexing is an important aid to filing. It is a process of determining the name, subject or other captions under which the documents are filed. Index is a guide to records. The main purpose of an index is to facilitate the location of required files and papers. Index helps the staffs to find out whether a particular file exists for a party or subject, and its place in the container. It also facilitates cross-referencing. Where records are classified in numerical order or subjectwise an index is necessary.



The purposes served by indexing are as follows:

- (a) easy location of files and documents
- (b) speedy cross-referencing
- (c) saving of time and effort in locating records
- (d) efficiency of record keeping
- (e) reducing the operating cost of records management

### 31.3.1 TYPES OF INDEX

- (a) **Fixed Index** – Instead of maintaining a separate index, an index may be bound with the book concerned. Such an index generally appear at the end of standard books in which subject matter is alphabetically arranged and then relevant page numbers are given against each heading or sub-heading.
- (b) **Bound Book Index** – Index is prepared in a bound book or register divided into alphabetical sections in which the names or documents are entered.
- (c) **Loose-Leaf Index** – It is another variation of the book index. In it, single sheets are fitted into metal hinges or screws. Index is prepared on these sheets. Whenever a new leaf is to be inserted, the book may be unscrewed and the relevant sheet put in. The binder containing the loose index sheets can be locked so that no sheets are taken out without proper authority.
- (d) **Vertical Card Index** – Each subject, document, or customer, is allotted a separate card on which necessary information appears. The cards may be of small size (12.5 x 7.5 cms.) or as per the need. They are classified and arranged alphabetically, geographically, numerically or subject wise. In some cases, more than one card may be prepared for the same set of information and each card may be arranged in a different manner, for example, in a library usually two cards are prepared for each book – one is arranged on the basis of author and the other on the basis of title of the book. The cards are filed vertically in steel or wooden drawers.
- (e) **Strip Index** – It consists of a frame into which strips of stiff paper are arranged in such a way that they can be taken out and replaced with ease. Each strip is devoted to one item. Frame can either be hanged on the wall or put of the table in a book form or even arranged on a rotary stand which can be turned to look at any part of the index.
- (f) **Wheel or Rotary Index** – Cards are arranged around the hub of a wheel. A single wheel can hold as many as 5000 cards. A can card can be inserted or withdrawn without disturbing the other cards. Entries can be also be made on the cards without removing from the wheel.



### 31.4 OFFICE MACHINES AND EQUIPMENT

Machines and Equipment have become an essential part of a modern office. A large number of machines are used for speedy, accurate and efficient performance of office activities. With fast technological developments, there is mechanisation in office operations resulting in increase of efficiency. The term 'mechanisation of office' refers to use of machines and equipments in office. Mechanisation in the office has the following objectives:

- (a) **Saving of time:** Machines turn out more work than what is manually possible. They work faster and thus there is considerable saving of time.
- (b) **Saving of labour:** Office machines are labour saving devices. Large volume of work can be handled by fewer employees and thus there is saving of labour.
- (c) **Increasing accuracy:** One of the objectives of using machines is accuracy of work especially in accounting, computation and calculations. They minimise clerical errors.
- (d) **Reduction of monotony:** The repetitive nature of office work is generally monotonous and cause boredom. Human labour can be spared of these effects when machines are used.
- (e) **Reduction of chances of fraud:** Machines like cash Register etc. put a check on frauds and misappropriation.
- (f) **Improving quality of work:** Written work produced with the help of machines is usually neat, clean and uniform in appearance.
- (g) **Ensuring better control:** Mechanisation of office enables the management to exercise more effective control over activities. For example, use of Time Recorder at the factory gate ensures better control over attendance.
- (h) **Improving goodwill:** The use of machines results in better service to the customers and public. This enhances the prestige of the organisation.



#### INTEXT QUESTIONS 31C

1. Define the term 'Indexing' in your own words.

---

---

2. Identify the type of index in the following cases.

- (a) The index appears at end of some books.

- (b) Single sheets are fitted into metal hinges or screws.



- (c) Separate card for each customer.
- (d) Cards are arranged around the hub of a wheel.
- (e) Index is prepared in a register divided into alphabetical sections.

### 31.4.1 TYPES OF MACHINES AND EQUIPMENT

A wide variety of machines are in use in the modern offices. There are machines which give print-like impression and can write many times faster than the most expert penman. There are machines which can produce multiple copies of a document. Machines are available for accounting, calculating and counting cash. Electronic computers can read, store, analyse and interpret information quickly. In mail room, letters can be opened, sealed, folded, franked, weighed and addressed automatically with the help of mailing machines. Messages can be sent from one place to another within no time through teleprinter, fax, telephone, internet. Some of the important machines in use are outlined below.

1. **Typewriter:** A typewriter is the most popular and commonly used machine in Government and private offices for typing official letters and documents. Although use of computer has reduced the importance of typewriter but it is still used in many offices. Typewriters are available in English, Hindi and other Indian languages. It is simple to operate and requires very little maintenance. It is very much popular in remote areas where there is no electric power available. The typewriters are available in different sizes and shapes. The more important among them are as follows:
  - (a) **Standard office Typewriter:** This is a manually operated machine mainly used for typing letters, statements and reports.
  - (b) **Portable Typewriter:** This is a small light-weight machine specially meant for use by travelling agents, journalists and executives.
  - (c) **Noiseless Typewriter:** Though this machine is not very popular, but being noiseless, it is considered to be better than noisy typewriter. It is most useful where the typists are required to work in the same room along with the executive and other office staff.
  - (d) **Electronic Typewriter:** This machine operates with electric power. It is faster, less tiring and gives uniform impression. It is operated with very light touch on the keyboard. It improves the quality of work and reduces the fatigue.
2. **Duplicator:** Duplicating is a process whereby a number of copies are obtained with the help of a master copy. When multiple copies of a letter or document have to be prepared, it is necessary to make use of the duplicating machine. A wide range of duplicators are available like Gelatin Duplicator, Spirit Duplicator, Stencil Duplicator, etc. The most commonly used method of duplicating in the office is the stencil



duplicating process. It is also known as cyclostyle or mimeograph. It needs (a) stencil, (b) duplicating ink, (c) duplicating paper and (d) duplicating machine. Stencil paper is a fibrous tissue which is coated with a wax like substance. The stencil is cut by the type face or stylus pushing aside the stencil coating to permit the ink to flow through the fibrous tissue. This stencil is inserted in the duplicator and fixed over the drum. The duplicating paper is fed in the machine manually or automatically by rotation of the drum. The paper receives the ink through the cuts in the stencil. Nearly 1,000 to 5,000 copies can be prepared through this process.

3. **Photocopier:** A photocopier is a machine that makes paper copies of documents and other printed images quickly and cheaply. This machine was introduced for the first time in 1960. It is run by electric current. It is simple to operate. It gives best quality of image both in black and white and colour. It runs at a faster rate and can produce more than 90 copies of a single page in a minute. It can print both the side of the page.
4. **Computer:** These days the 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. It can be defined as 'an electronic data processing machine which processes raw data into meaningful information'.

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 Programme 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 the disk. You can produce an error-free document as per your requirement. High speed, flexibility and accuracy are the main advantages of the computer.

5. **Electronic Time Keeping Machine:** In big organisations the arrival and departure of staff members are recorded electronically. They are provided with a particular card having a magnetic stripe on it. By swiping it through the time recording machines, the arrival and departure times are recorded.
6. **Telephone:** Now-a-days, it is impossible to imagine the office without a telephone. It is the most convenient means of oral communication. It is widely used for internal as well as external communication. Mobile phones are also very much popular now a days. In comparison with fixed line phones, mobiles are more convenient to contact the persons at any time. It is also very convenient to send SMS through mobile phones.
7. **Private Branch Exchange (PBX) System:** Under this system the internal telephone extensions are brought together on a private switchboard. An operator helps in providing connection to various callers. All the internal and external calls are handled by the operator. This system has been quite popular in big organisations.



8. **Electronic Private Automatic Branch Exchange (EPABX) System:** Under this system there is no need for telephone operators because the system is automatic. The internal communication from one extension is possible by dialing the relevant internal phone number. However, external communications are sent through operator or by dialing a particular number say 'zero'. Programming of telephone connections is also possible through PABX. If the person called is not available in his seat, the connection will automatically shift to other extension as per the programme.
9. **Intercom:** It is an automatic system of office inter-communications. It does not require an exchange. Multicore cable is used throughout the installation so that each telephone can be connected direct to every other.
10. **Accounting Machines:** Accounting services may be provided manually or with the help of accounting machines. The mechanisation of accounting is becoming increasingly important in large organisations as they have to cope with a large amount of figure work. Accuracy and speed are the main features of accounting machines and it enables analysis of various types of figures for different purposes within minutes or even seconds. Some of the more common types of accounting machines are:
  - (a) **Adding Machines:** Various types of adding machines are available in the market. They can be operated manually or electrically and they may be listing or non-listing types. Listing machines provide the printed record while the non-listing machines give the required result.
  - (b) **Calculating Machines:** A calculating machine can perform a variety of functions like addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, percentages, square and cube roots etc. Scientific calculators can perform many more functions. Calculating machines contribute greatly to office efficiency by eliminating routine mental calculations. They also contribute to economy in staffing and can perform a variety of functions with speed and accuracy.
  - (c) **Cash Registers:** 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 records cumulative total of re-ceipts. At the close of the day, the owner or manager can open the machine lock to know the total sales. The amount kept in shelves can be checked with the cumulative total.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 31D

1. List the functions of calculating machine.
  - (a) \_\_\_\_\_



- (b) \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Mention the advantages of photocopier machine.
- (a) \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Mail Room Equipments:** The mail room staff is always busy in repetitive duties concerning the inward and outward mail. In large organisations, the volume of mail is also large. So it becomes difficult and time consuming to handle large amount of mails. It also causes monotony and boredom. Use of various mechanical devices helps to reduce monotony and increase the efficiency of mailing operations. The following types of equipments and machines are used in the mail room.

- (a) **Letter Opener:** Letters may be opened by hand or by the letter-opening machine. The machine is used when the number of mail received is very large. It operates manually or electrically at a great speed. It can open 100 to 500 letters per minute.
- (b) **Folding Machine:** A machine of this type is of great service when letters are sent in large numbers. This machine is capable of folding papers to the size required for insertion in the envelopes. A folding machine can fold 5,000 to 20,000 sheets per hour. It is possible to fold, insert and make letters ready for mailing with this machine. The machine is to be adjusted as per the needs of foldings.
- (c) **Sealing Machine:** This machine is used to automatically moisten the flaps of envelopes and seal them properly. The machine is very useful in those offices where a large number of envelopes have to be sealed every day. Certain machines are designed to seal with wax. Another type of machine is available in which a strip is pasted on the flap.
- (d) **Mailing Scale:** In big business organisations large quantity of mail is sent every day. Postal stamps on mail are to be affixed as per postal rates which are prescribed according to weight. The Mailing Scale is used to weigh so that correct postage stamps can be affixed on them.
- (e) **Numbering, Dating and Time Recording Machines:** After opening the mail, letters are stamped with time and date of receipt. A serial number is given for numerical reference. An automatic numbering machine is popular for stamping serial numbers of letters received. The serial numbers automatically change in this machine. Dating machine is used for stamping date on mail. Four rubber





rings with the impression of date, month and year rotate on wheels. Self-inking stamp pad is used for inking the impression. Time recording machine is used for recording the accurate time of arrival of letters. Assistants enter the opened letter into the machine, and it prints the correct time on letter accurately.

- (f) **Addressing Machine:** This machine is used to print addresses on envelopes, wrappers, parcels etc. to be sent frequently to a large number of regular customers. In Addressograph machine inked ribbon is used to print the addresses from plates. List of addresses once prepared can be repeatedly used any number of times. The address plates are stacked on a hopper fitted to the machine. The required plates are automatically selected and fed into the machine. These machines may be operated manually or electronically.
- (g) **Franking Machine:** This machine is used to make impressions of the required denomination of postage stamps on the outbound letters and envelopes. It is very popular in large offices where thousands of letters have to be stamped every day. The Franking Machine can be hired under a license from the Post-Office. Rent is charged for use of the machine. The letter to be stamped is inserted in the machine and a handle is operated. The machine marks the letter with the required denomination of the postage stamp. It stops when the total value of the postage is used up. It can be again re-set by the Post Office on further payment.
- (h) **Fax:** The FAX service enables instant transmission of the facsimile of an entire document. It can send handwritten and printed matter as well as pictures, charts and diagrams to different locations within or outside the country. The advantage of this service over TELEX is that it sends messages without the need for typing. This service is permitted on existing telephone lines on a dial-up basis. The FAX machine is to be procured and owned by the user and should be attached to the telephone lines

### 31.4.2 HANDLING OFFICE MACHINES AND EQUIPMENT

You learnt about the different types of machines and equipment used in offices. The operation of each machines are different. Some machines need specialised technical staff for its operation while others need simple orientation. In this section let us know some of the general aspect of handling machines and equipment.

- (a) **Proper Installation:** All machines and equipments are to be installed properly in the right place. This will ensure better efficiency and productivity.
- (b) **Training and Orientation of Staff.** All staff members those engaged to use any particular machine need to be trained by an experienced professional. They must read the user's manual thoroughly. Regular orientation is also required in case of certain types of machine. The users should know how to change the cartridge of the



printer and fax, ribbon of the typewriters etc.

- (c) **Regular Maintenance:** All machines require regular maintenance. Periodical inspection by technician avoids minor problems in the machines.
- (d) **Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC):** It is a facility that enables the user of any durable goods to avail of maintenance service for a particular period by giving a one-time fee. The office machines and equipments of high value must be covered under AMC.
- (e) **Guarantee and Warranty:** The office must record the terms and conditions of Guarantee and Warranty. If any defect is noticed in the product or problem in operation of the product, it must be immediately intimated to the seller.
- (f) **Insurance:** After buying the machines and equipment, it is advisable to get those insured against loss, theft and fire.
- (g) **Facility of Air Conditioning:** In certain cases a particular temperature is required to be maintained for smooth functioning of machines and equipments. For example, for operation of computers we need to have an air-conditioned room.
- (h) **Power back up:** Most of the office equipment and machines are run by electric power. The office must make necessary provision for supply of uninterrupted power to equipments like Computer, Fax, EPABX etc. Frequent power failure may lead to serious damage in the machines.
- (i) **Data back up:** Every office deals with certain data. It is prime responsibility of each and every office to have a back up of all these data. For example, the data stored in the hard disk of computer may be lost due to technical problems. So, to avoid such a situation, one should keep a copy of those data in a CD (Compact Disk). A hard copy (print out) of the same may be kept in the concerned file.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 31E

1. What is meant by 'Annual Maintenance Contract'?

---

---

2. Name the office equipment and machine used for the following purpose.

(a) Machine used to print addresses on the envelope.

(b) Machine that transmits handwritten and printed matter instantly to distant place.



**Notes**

- (c) Machine used to moist the flaps of the envelope and seal them properly.

- (d) Machine used to make impression of postage stamp on the envelope.

- (e) Machine used to stamp the date on the envelope.



### **31.5 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

- Mail refers to the written communication that passes through the messenger service or the post office. It may be (a) incoming, (b) outgoing, and (c) inter departmental mail.
- The steps involve in handling incoming and outgoing mails are:

<b>Incoming mails</b>	<b>Outgoing mails</b>
Receiving the mail	Collection of outgoing mail
Opening the mail	Entering the mail
Scrutiny of contents	Folding of letters
Date stamping	Preparation of envelopes
Recording	Sorting, weighing and stamping
Sorting and distribution	Despatching

:

- Filing is the process of organising the correspondence and records in a proper sequence so that they can be easily located. It classifies and arranges the record properly. Filing protects the documents against possible loss or damage. It provides a method of obtaining information without loss of time.
- Classification of documents is necessary to ensure prompt availability of records. The main systems of classification of files in an office are: Alphabetical, Numerical, Geographical, and Subject-wise.
- The files must be preserved carefully by using any suitable methods of filing. A number of methods are used which can be grouped under (a) Traditional Methods; and (b) Modern Methods. Spike filing, Folder filing, Pigeon hole filing, Box filing, Guard book filing, Arch lever filing are some of the traditional methods of filing. The modern methods of filing are classified as (a) Horizontal Filing; (b) Vertical Filing.
- Indexing is an important aid to filing. It is a process of determining the name, subject



or other captions under which the documents are filed. Index is a guide to records. There are different types of indexing being used offices like: fixed index, bound book index, loose-leaf index, vertical card index, strip index, wheel or rotary index

- Mechanisation of office' refers to use of machines and equipments in office. It saves time, labour and increases accuracy in official work. It helps in reduction of monotony and reduces chances of fraud. It improves quality of work and ensures better control thereby improves the goodwill of the organisation.
- The main equipment and machines used in offices are Typewriter, Duplicator Photocopier, Computer, Electronic Time Keeping Machine, Telephone Private Branch Exchange (PBX) System, Electronic Private Automatic Branch Exchange (EPABX) System, Intercom, Accounting Machines etc.
- In mail room the main equipment and machines used are Letter Opener, Folding Machine, Sealing Machine, Mailing Scale, Numbering, Dating and Time Recording Machines, Addressing Machine, Franking Machine, Fax, etc.
- The general aspect of handling machines and equipment includes, (a) Proper Installation, (b) Training and Orientation of Staff, (c) Regular Maintenance, (d) Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC), (e) Guarantee and Warranty (f) Insurance, (g) Facility of Air Conditioning, (h) Power back up, and (i) Data back up.



### **31.6 KEY TERMS**

Arch lever filing	Computer	Filing system
Folder filing	Franking machine	Guard book filing
Horizontal filing	Indexing	Letter opener
Mailing scale	Pigeon hole filing	Sealing machine
Spike filing	Stamping	Vertical filing



### **31.7 TERMINAL QUESTIONS**

#### **Very Short Answer Type Questions**

1. Define the term 'Filing'.
2. What is meant by Arch lever Filing?
3. State the meaning of Fixed Index.
4. Mention any two purposes served by Indexing.
5. State the uses of franking machine.



### Short Answer Type Questions

6. State the objectives of filing in an office.
7. State any four functions of filing system.
8. Explain the various modern methods of filing.
9. What is indexing? State any two purpose served by indexing.
10. State any four general aspects of handling office machines and equipment.

### Long Answer Type Questions

11. Describe any four equipment used in mail room of an office.
12. State the different steps followed in handling incoming mails.
13. What is meant by the term 'filing'. State the objectives of filing.
14. Describe in brief the various systems of classification of files.
15. Explain any four traditional methods of filing.



## 31.8 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

**31A** 1. (a) Local (b) Outstation

2. (a) Scrutiny of contents  
(b) Sorting  
(c) Recording  
(d) E-mail  
(e) Referencing

**31B** 1. It is a special almirah or cupboard divided into number of square size compartments having one side open.

2. (a) Alphabetical classification  
(b) Geographical classification  
(c) Subject classification  
(d) Guard book classification  
(e) Horizontal classification



- 31C 2.** (a) Fixed index  
 (b) Loose-leaf index  
 (c) Vertical index  
 (d) Wheel or rotary index  
 (e) Bound book index

- 31D 1.** (a) Addition  
 (b) Subtraction  
 (c) Multiplication

2. (a) Simple to operate  
 (b) Faster speed  
 (c) Can print both side of the page

**31E 1.** It is a facility that enables the user of any durable goods to avail of maintenance service for a particular period by giving a one-time fee.

2. (a) Addressing machine  
 (b) Fax machine  
 (c) Sealing machine  
 (d) Franking machine  
 (e) Dating machine



**DO AND LEARN**

Visit any five offices and make a list of equipments and machines being used there in the following format.

		Office 'A'	Office 'B'	Office 'C'	Office 'D'	Office 'E'
Main functions						
Equipment and Machines used	1.					
	2.					
	3.					
	4.					
	5.					



Do you think that the equipment and machines are appropriate as per the nature of function of the office? Give your opinion in brief.



### **ROLE PLAY**

Mohit and Rohit are two friends. Mohit discontinued his study after passing the secondary examination and recently joined in an office as Junior Assistant. Rohit continues his study. On day, they met each other in the market and started discussing as follows.

Rohit : Hi! Mohit. Congratulations. You must be very happy now.

Mohit : Thanks. But I am little bit worried.

Rohit : But Why?

Mohit : In the office I am posted in the maintenance section and I am looking after the maintenance of machines and equipments. But I do not have any knowledge about these machines.

Rohit : Don't worry my friend. I will tell you detail. Come with me.

Both the friend sat down and discussed about the handling of equipment and machines in an office. Assume the role of Mohit and ask your friend to play as Rohit. Start playing the role.

### **Chapter at a Glance**

#### **31.1 Mail**

31.1.1 Handling Incoming Mail

31.1.2 Handling Outward Mail

31.1.3 Handling Inter-departmental Mail

31.1.4 Handling E-mail

#### **31.2 Filing System**

31.2.1 Objectives of Filing

31.2.2 Functions of Filing System

31.2.3 Classification of Filing

31.2.4 Methods of Filing

#### **31.3 Indexing**

31.3.1 Types of Index

#### **31.4 Office Machines and Equipment**

31.4.1 Types of Machines and Equipment

31.4.2 Handling Office Machines and Equipment