
UNIT 1 HANDLING MAIL

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

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

1.1 INTRODUCTION (INWARD AND OUTWARD MAIL)

It is essential for the business houses to initiate and maintain contacts with their customers, government organizations, financial institutions, investors, employees for survival and growth. As written communication is the most formal and reliable form of communication, email, letters, memos, circulars, endorsements, reports etc. are written regularly to exchange information among business associates. Sending and receiving of written communication of various types is termed as Mail.

Handling of Mail is one of the important functions of an office. The Private Secretary should have sound knowledge regarding the procedure of handling of mail to be followed in the organization. Efficient and effective handling of mail helps a company to boost its business and have better image of the organization. On the other hand, inefficient and ineffective mailing system may cause delay and loss of business.

1.1.1 Planning Mail Handling Operations

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

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

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

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

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

1.1.2 Kinds of Mail

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

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

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

1.1.3 Procedure of Handling Mail: Electronic Mail and Physical Mail

As stated above, mail can be received electronically or physically (manually).

Electronically mail can be received and sent out by e-mail, fax, mobile phone etc.

This type of mail does not require any elaborate handling procedure. The mail is mostly addressed by name on individual's address or number. Fax messages on receipt are directly delivered to person concerned for further action.

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

Handling of Electronic Mail

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

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

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

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

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

Handling of Physical Mail

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

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

1.1.3.1 Handling of Inward Mail

In every organization, there are defined steps for physical handling of inward mail so that the mail could reach the concerned official without delay. These steps vary

depending on the size and nature of the organization. The following procedure is usually followed in handling of incoming mails if mail is received manually.

1. Receiving Mail

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

2. Sorting Mail

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

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

3. Opening Mail

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

- a) contents of the envelope are not damaged.
- b) before disposing off the envelope, nothing is left inside the envelope.
- c) enclosures are fastened if they are not properly tagged as there may be chances of losing the same.

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

4. Examining Contents and Stamping Mail

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

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

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

Date _____ Time _____

Diary No. _____

Signature _____

5. Recording Mail

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

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

Specimen of Incoming Mail Register

S.No./ Diary No.	Date	Ref. No. of letter	Name and Address of Sender	Brief Subject	Deptt./ official referred	Initials of Receiver	Date of Reply

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

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

6. Distributing Mail

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

7. Follow-up Action

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

1.1.3.2 Handling of Outward Mail

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

1. Production of Mail

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

2. Collection of Mail

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

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

3. Recording Mail

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

Outgoing Mail Register/ Despatch Register

S.No./ Despatch No.	Date	Reference No.	Name & Address of Receiver	Subject	Mode of Delivery used	Postage Stamps		Remarks
						Rs.	P.	

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

PEON BOOK

S.No.	Ref. No. & Date	Name & Address of Receiver	Brief Subject	By whom delivered	Signature of Receiver along with date and time

4. Writing of Addresses

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

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

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

Postal Index Number

It is unique 6 digit number, shortly known as PIN code. The First digit denotes the Circle and next two digits denote area and remaining digits denote post office. Hence, with use PIN code, very speed and accurate postal delivery is possible all over the country.

In case of addressing large mail, an Addressing Machine can be used which saves a lot of time and energy of a secretary besides reproduction of correct address on the outgoing mail.

5. Folding letters and Inserting them into Envelopes

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

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

6. Sealing of Envelopes

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

7. Affixing Stamps on Envelopes

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

Franking Machines are commonly used by offices for stamping the outgoing mail.

Letters which are to be sent by special messenger and courier companies are not to be stamped.

8. Posting Mail

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

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

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

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

1.2 MAIL ROOM EQUIPMENT

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

- increases in the speed of operations.
- saving of time.
- improve in efficiency and accuracy.

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

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

1. Letter Opening Machine

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



Fig. 1.1 : Letter Opening Machine

2. Numbering and Dating Machines

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

3. Folding and Inserting Machine

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



Fig. 1.2 : Folding and Inserting Machine

4. Sealing Machine

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



Fig. 1.3 : Sealing Machine

5. Mailing Scale

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



Fig. 1.4 : Maling Scale

6. Addressograph (Addressing Machine)

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



Fig. 1.5 : Addressograph

7. Franking Machine

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

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

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

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

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

Now-a-days, business houses used Mail Accounting Software to manage postage expenses. The software helps in collecting, maintaining and reporting mail accounting data. It also helps in tracking and better controlling business mail expenses.



Fig. 1.6 : Franking Machine

Handling of incoming and outgoing mail is quite time consuming and monotonous job.

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

1.3 SPECIAL MAIL POSTAL SERVICES

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

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

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

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

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

Certificate of Posting

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

It must be clearly understood that the articles in respect of which such certificates are issued are not registered and that they are treated in exactly the same manner

as if they had been posted in a letter box. In the event of loss, damage or delay, the certificates will confer no claim for compensation, nor do they furnish any proof of the nature of the contents.

Post Boxes

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

Post Bag

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

Identification Cards

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

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

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

Poste Restante

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

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

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

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

Recorded Delivery

The service is available to all classes of postal articles for which registered service is available (except parcels) for delivery within India.

Recorded Delivery articles should carry the superscription 'Recorded Delivery' and be prepaid with the appropriate postage and the prescribed fee per article. Articles should be presented at the counter of post office along with a record of posting form.

Business Reply Service

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

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

Blind Literature Packets

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

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

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

- (a) The Packets shall consist only articles for the use of the blind, and shall not contain any communication either in writing or printed in ordinary type.
- (b) The Packet shall bear on the outside the inscription "Literature for the Blind" and the written or printed name and address of the sender.

Registration

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

Letters, letter cards, postcards, book and pattern packets, blind literature packets, parcels and newspapers prepaid with postage at newspaper rates of postage, etc. may be registered at any post office for transmission by post to any other post office.

The prepayment of the postage and registration fee is compulsory in the case of all registered articles.

Insurance

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

Value Payable Articles

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

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

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

Direct Post

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

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

Only un-addressed postal articles like letters, cards, brochures, questionnaires, pamphlets, samples, promotional items like CDs/floppies and Cassettes etc., coupons, posters, mailers or any other form of printed communication that is not prohibited by the Indian Post Office Act 1898 or Indian Post Office Rules 1933 are accepted. A minimum quantity of 1000 pieces can be accepted under the 'Direct Post'. Articles posted as 'Direct Post' will bear no address or name on the communication. These will be accepted in bulk in designated offices and will not be posted in a letter box.

The senders of Direct Post can specify the numbers and areas, in which the sender wishes the Direct Post articles to be distributed. However, no commitment would be given for delivery of the article to any particular address or a person. The sender would be informed that the articles handed over by him had been delivered according to his instructions

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

Business Post

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

Media Post

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

International Registered Post

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

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

Logistics Post

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

Express Mail Service (EMS)

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

1.4 SPEED POST

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

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

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

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

1.4.1 Opening A Speed Post Account

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

Check Your Progress A

1) Fill up the following blanks:-

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

2) State whether each of the following statements are True or False:-

- a) Mail received electronically requires an elaborate handling procedure.
- b) An Incoming Mail Register is maintained to make a brief record of all the incoming mail. Recording of mail helps in tracing out any received letter at a later date.

- c) The Poste Restante is intended solely for the convenience of strangers and travelers who are not certain about their addresses in a particular city where they are touring.
- d) Franking Machine helps in printing of addresses on envelopes, parcels etc.
- e) Registration of articles should carry the superscription 'Recorded Delivery' and be prepaid with the appropriate postage and the prescribed fee per article.

1.5 COURIER POST

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

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

1.6 COURIER SERVICES

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

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

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

The world's largest courier companies include DHL, FedEx, OBC Express Ltd., UPS, etc.

1.7 AIRMAIL SERVICES

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

All surcharged air mail articles must bear the prescribed Blue Air Mail label available gratis at the Post Office, on the top left-hand corner on the address side.

The pre-payment of the full air mail fee on parcels and of at least 71 per cent of the total charges including the air fee on all other surcharged articles is obligatory.

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

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

Limited air-lift

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

1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress A

1. Fill in the Blank:-

- a) Postal Index Number
- b) weighed
- c) Post Bag
- d) Franking Machine
- e) Speed Post

2. True an False:-

- a) False
- b) True
- c) True
- d) False
- e) False

1.9 LET US SUM UP

Written communication received and sent out from an organization is known as Mail. Mail can be handled physically or electronically. Mail is of three types: Incoming Mail, Outgoing Mail and Inter-Departmental Mail. The mail handling work should be planned and organized in the most systematic and efficient manner. The process of handling of physical mail involves various steps like Receiving Mail, Sorting Mail, Opening Mail, Scrutinizing contents and sorting, Date Stamping, Recording Mail and Distributing Mail. The process of handling of outgoing mail involves the steps viz. Signature and Reference, Collecting Mail from Departments,

Sorting collected mail, Recording outgoing mail, Addressing Envelopes, Folding the letters and inserting them into envelopes, Sealing and stamping of envelopes and Posting Mail. Various mail room equipment like Letter Opener, Numbering and Dating Machine, Folding Machine, Sealing Machine, Mailing Scale, Addressing Machine and Franking Machine play an important role in carrying out mailing operations where volume of mail to be handled is large. Various services like speed post, postal registration, postal insurance, certificate of posting, Poste Restante, Post Box, Post Bag, Identification Cards, Business Reply Cards, Logistics Post, Business Post, Media Post, Direct Post, etc. are some important mail carriage services offered by Department of Posts. Courier post is customized services for door-to-door delivery of mail. In addition to postal services, courier services are also used widely by business organizations for carriage of their mail. They include delivery of any type of article of any value or weight, reliable and safe delivery, speedy delivery as they follow stringent time schedules, wide coverage (almost all corners of globe), transit insurance facility, facility of consignment status by web based Track and Trace System which can be had on mobile and e-mail, proof of delivery on request etc.

1.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

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

1.11 REFERENCE BOOKS

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