

Chapter 8

Telecommunications

Section A

Telephones

Paragraphs 5 - 19

" B

Communications; Overseas Telegrams
Telex - Facsimile - Inland Telegrams

Paragraphs 20 - 64

GENERAL

1 Telecommunications: General instructions - Telecommunications services are expensive. Officers must take care to choose the cheapest method that will meet their needs. Inland telegrams, which are generally more expensive than telex messages and trunk calls, should be sent only when the addressee cannot be reached by either of those services. Urgent messages not involving discussion and those to which an immediate reply cannot be given should be sent by the telex service in preference to using trunk telephone calls. Consideration should also be given to facsimile transmission. Overseas telephone calls must not be made unless there is no practicable alternative, for example telex or overseas telegram. It is important in the interests of speed, efficiency, economy and security that all those who use the telegraph system should know and obey the rules. The detailed procedures for using telecommunication services are set out in the following paragraphs.

2 SECURITY

Security classified information must never be disclosed on the telephone, nor may it be included in messages sent by telex; inland telegram or overseas telegram unless suitable cypher facilities exist at both terminals. Even so, it must be emphasised that classified telegrams are subjected to various processes which involve aspects of security. It is, therefore, imperative that all security rules covering the transmission, retention and general handling of classified documents, as described in the departmental Security Instructions should be strictly observed. The same precautions must be observed for facsimile transmission which may be used to send material with no higher classification than restricted.

3 One should act on the assumption that all telephone conversations are made on open lines and particularly those over radio telephone or foreign controlled lines; even the "privacy-set" is vulnerable to interception.

4 Telephone discussion of classified or commercially sensitive matters therefore involves a positive risk of damage to the national interest or, at the least, embarrassment to the Department. If, however, after consideration of this in relation to the advantage of a saving in time, a telephone conversation is deemed to be essential, every effort must be made to render the conversation unintelligible to an eavesdropper.

SECTION A TELEPHONES

5 PROVISION OF TELEPHONES

Financial responsibility for most of the Department's telephone systems is delegated to Accommodation Section. This involves the preparation of estimates, and can involve discussions with other Departments about the sharing of expenses jointly incurred. There is only a limited number of extensions available to the Department in Thames House South on the Whitehall CBX network, telephones should therefore be shared wherever possible.

6 Requests for additional telephones, or for the moving of existing extensions, should be made to the person responsible for accommodation. Faults should be reported immediately to the operator, the faulty line being held where possible and the operator contacted on another telephone. A note of the time and the telephone numbers involved will be useful if a report cannot be made immediately. The operator should be told about broken telephones.

7 MAKING CALLS

Every effort should be made to prevent the wasteful use of the telephone especially during the peak period, 09.00 - 13.00 hours. Calls should be brief and to the point - not only do long calls cost more money but they can create a demand for extra equipment (eg lines to the public exchange) which can be a continuing expense. Calls over private wires (or 'tie lines') are cheaper than calls over the public network. When an STD call (other than a local call) is made, whoever answers should be told whence the caller is speaking and it should be remembered that when the called extension is engaged, it is cheaper to call again rather than to hold on. Senior officers should ensure that their staff do not make trunk or overseas calls unless these are essential, and that the general use of the telephone is efficient and economic. In some cases, the use of Telex is to be preferred.

8 If the person to be called is in the Department but is not listed in any available Directory, the appropriate DLO or Office Manager, or Enquiry Room should be consulted.

9 OVERSEAS CALLS

Principals or equivalent grades and above should authorise overseas telephone calls which should only be made if there is no practical alternative. Justification of the use of the telephone in preference to telex or overseas telegram may be required.

10 CALLS OUTSIDE NORMAL HOURS

Certain CBX switchboards in the Whitehall area close down at 17.30 hours.

Emergency calls in the "silent hours" should be made as follows:-

- (a) to this department by calling the Duty Officer at the Department of Industry. (See the departmental Telephone Directory.)