

CHAPTER 9

CORRESPONDENCE AND PUBLIC BUSINESS

CLASSIFIED CORRESPONDENCE

- 9.1 The Anguilla Government will use only two classifications “Confidential” and “Staff in Confidence”. The former will be used to protect unauthorised disclosure of information which could cause damage either directly or indirectly to the interest of Anguilla or the United Kingdom. The latter is to protect unauthorised disclosure which could cause embarrassment to the Government of Anguilla or the United Kingdom or to individual members or Civil Servants of these Governments. Classified correspondence and documents must always be kept separate from open correspondence and material, and must be stored under lock and key. No reference to classified correspondence shall be made in any open correspondence. It is the responsibility of Heads of Department to ensure that the members of their staff, other than officers authorised to do so, shall not be in a position to handle or see classified documents. The Permanent Secretary Public Administration will ensure that all Secretariat staff, all Heads of Department and other specified officers sign the Official Secrets Act declaration.
- 9.2 All copies of documents which need to be classified as “Confidential” or “Staff in Confidence” must show the classification at the top and bottom of every page in capital letters. Envelopes used for the transmission of such material must show the classification on the outside. Files containing classified material must show the classification on the outside. Files containing classified material must be clearly marked or labelled with the appropriate classification on the front of the file cover at top and bottom. Classified documents must never be left where unauthorised persons can see or obtain access to them. They must be kept in a secure locked container (safe, security cupboard or filing cabinet with a locking bar whenever they are left unattended even for a short time.
- 9.3 Classified documents must never be sent by post. If they are entrusted to the hand of any person who is not authorised to see them they must be sealed in such a way that an attempt to open them would be evident. Classified documents for transmission overseas to British official addresses will be sent by Diplomatic Bag. Classified documents transmitted between the Secretariat and

other Departments must be recorded in a dispatch book and signed for on receipt. As indicated above they must be securely sealed if they are entrusted to the hands of persons not authorised to see them and the recipient must check that the seal is not damaged. Waste copies of classified material (including drafts, defective type or duplicated copies, etc) must not be put into ordinary waste baskets but must be taken to the Head of Department who will arrange for their destruction under supervision.

REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENCE

- 9.4 All communications, whether from the public or from other Departments must be answered with the least possible delay. Where it is not possible for a prompt reply to be sent, an interim acknowledgement should be sent within five working days and a substantive reply sent as soon thereafter as possible.

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR

- 9.5 Officers, other than Heads of Department, who wish to make representations of a public or private nature to the Governor, must forward such correspondence in duplicate through their Head of Department, who will forward it to the Permanent Secretary Public Administration for onward transmission to the Governor.

USE OF OFFICIAL STATIONERY

- 9.6 Official stationery must on no account be used for private correspondence or for any purpose not directly connected with the work of the department concerned. Heads of Department are required to ensure that the strictest economy in the use of stationery is exercised. All orders for stationery must be scrutinized by the Head of the Department or a responsible officer deputed for this purpose before they are issued.

FRANKING OF ENVELOPES

- 9.7 Official correspondence which is permissible to send free through the inland post must be enclosed in envelopes indicating they are for use on Government service and must be franked by the impression of the official franking stamp on the face of the envelope or packet. Officers who are authorised to send official correspondence free through the post will be issued with approved franking stamps and it is the duty of such officers to ensure that franking stamps are not put to unauthorised use.

ANNUAL REPORTS

- 9.8 Heads of Department are required to submit to the Minister charged with responsibility for that Department, or in other cases to the Governor, but not later than 31 March, a report on the work of their Department during the preceding calendar year.

DISCLOSURE OF CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS

- 9.9 Unless mandated by law Heads of Department and other officers must not disclose or produce in evidence any official document of a classified nature without previously obtaining the permission of the Governor.

GAZETTE

- 9.10 The Official Gazette will be published as occasion demands. Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that material for publication in the Gazette is forwarded without delay to the Gazette Office. Requests for copies of the Gazette from private persons or bodies, whether in or outside Anguilla, should be addressed to the Clerk to the House of Assembly.

RECORDS

- 9.11 The preservation and destruction of official documents is governed by the following rules:
- (a) No documents or correspondence may be destroyed without the prior approval of the Permanent Secretary Public Administration and correspondence should not be recommended for destruction before it is ten years old;
 - (b) Heads of Department should review in June of each year the files in their charge which are over ten years old, and in keeping with current guidelines mark files for destruction or retention for a specified period. Wherever possible electronic storage can be done for files to be destroyed.
 - (c) A record should be kept of all files destroyed and the date on which they were destroyed;

- (d) the following documents should not be destroyed:
 - (i) those required by law or regulations to be preserved;
 - (ii) documents of historical or other interest, particularly those relating to the history of Anguilla;
 - (iii) documents relating to land and claims thereto, and to the value of land and property especially Crown Lands;
 - (iv) documents which are more than a hundred years old unless they are of a routine nature.