

Copy of Composite Punjab Government consolidated circular letter No. 2334-ASI-60/15708, dated 3rd May, 1960 as amended from time to time

Subject.—Confidential Reports.

I am directed to invite attention to Punjab Government circular letter No. 15851-GI-56/1643, dated the 28th January, 1957, on the subject of confidential reports, and to point out that since its issue a number of further instructions on the subject have been sent to you. It seems suitable, therefore, to issue a consolidated revised circular and this letter embodies all instructions on the subject brought up-to-date.

2. **The need for regular and punctual recording of Reports in Personal Files.**—It is essential that all officers should write their reports in the personal files of their subordinates regularly and punctually. The reports should cover the financial year and should be recorded as soon after the close of the said year as possible and in any case not later than six weeks thereafter. Not only should every official, whether gazetted or non-gazetted, possess a personal file or character roll, but it should be kept up-to-date and not allowed to remain without remarks for over a period of 12 months, otherwise its utility as a confidential record disappears. When an official is placed under suspension as a result of disciplinary proceedings, the fact should be recorded in the personal file. Similarly the final result of the disciplinary proceedings should also be duly recorded. As during the period of suspension an officer has as a rule no immediate superior, there tend to be gaps in the Personal Files, and it is the responsibility of the authority who keeps the file to ensure that entries regarding such periods are invariably made. It must be remembered that the personal file of an official is used for various purposes, e.g. promotion, punishment, appeals and memorials and in dealing with the question whether his service is approved for the purpose of full pension. If, therefore, it is not carefully maintained it is deprived of much of its value. Indeed, the very purpose for which it is maintained is defeated.

Haryana Govt. letter No. 2784-3 S-70, dated 2nd March, 1971.

Explanatory Note.—The confidential reports should be recorded without delay. Further, in the event of heavy delay occurring in isolated cases, it should be possible for the higher authorities to discount to the extent necessary such reports as had been written after a lapse of a very long period and as were attended with suspicious features on one ground or another. The assessment of the record as a whole of the officer concerned would thus not be affected unduly by such a report.

Pb. Government letter No. 126-ASI-64/2377 dated 17th January, 1964

3. **What the Report should contain.**—Forms have been prescribed by different departments for different officers but it is not possible for Government to prescribe any standard form for all departments on which reports should be recorded. While, therefore, every department is free to obtain the reports in forms which may have been laid down or which it may consider most suitable it is felt that the balance of advantage would definitely be in favour of prescribing a simple form (specimen enclosed as Annexure (C)) instead of providing a multiplicity of columns and items on which assessment is to be made. Too elaborate and lengthy a form would only lead to complications. Generally speaking, the reporting officer should state whether the officer or official concerned has been able satisfactorily to discharge the duties of his office. It should also be stated whether the person is able, conscientious and hard working and the degree of his qualities in these directions should be indicated. If the officer or official reported on has to control an establishment under him, it should be stated whether he is capable of supervising their work and whether his relations with his subordinates are satisfactory. It is important to mention whether the officer or official is punctual and, has maintained discipline. It should also be stated (if he comes into contact with the public) whether he is accessible and hears and deals with complaints properly and is also courteous in his behaviour. In the case of touring officers, it should be stated whether their touring is systematic and adequate. The report should also specifically bring out any defects, remediable or otherwise, so that a complete picture of the official's work including the favourable and un-favourable points is available. If any particular incident has occurred during the period under report which shows up the officer in good or bad light, this should be mentioned. Letters of appreciation issued by various authorities or persons and any major event of work done or special contribution made by the officer towards implementation of a particular scheme or successful conclusion of a special campaign will naturally be taken into consideration by the reporting authority while recording the annual remarks on the work of the officer if he considers them relevant in an annual assessment of the officer's work.

Pb. Government letter No. 126-ASI-64/2377, dated 17th January, 1964.

Explanatory Notes.—(i) Some reporting officers tend to make mention of very slight defects in a subordinate. Government is of the view that very slight defects should be brought to an officer's

notice verbally in the way of advice and guidance and need not find mention in annual confidential report unless they are of type which have been more than once brought to the subordinate's attention but which he nevertheless persists in. Likewise, remediable defects should also be pointed out during the year so that the official concerned may make an effort to improve and to remove those defects.

Pb. Government letter No. 126-ASI-64/2377 dated 17th January, 1964

(ii) Quite often it is more convenient to get an overall assessment of an officer by pointing out some defects against one of the other columns in relationship to remarks made regarding his work with reference to that column. It is not the intention that all defects should be enumerated against the column "Defects, if any" if their mention against some other column permits a more rounded and balanced judgement of the officer. In these circumstances it is better to mention the defects against the column where they seem relevant and merely state against the column "Defects, if any" the fact that these have been pointed out already.

(iii) Generally against the column "Defects, if any" should be mentioned any significant general or particular defect in the subordinate which is part of his method of work or manner, personality or reputation and minor matters can either be ignored or dealt with as indicated in note (i) above.

Pb. Government letter No. 4283-GI-58/11555, dated 22nd April, 1958.

(iv) Where a pending enquiry finds mention in the confidential report of an officer, it is incumbent upon the authority maintaining the personal file of that officer, to ensure that the result of enquiry is also recorded in the personal file.

(v) Normally the reporting authorities should give their remarks in the confidential reports on the basis of their personal knowledge or assessment. There can, however, be occasions when a reporting authority receives complaints against an officer. It will not be appropriate for a reporting authority to make mention of such complaints in the confidential reports without trying to shift the truth. In such a case, he should give an indication whether he believes the complaints to be true or false or that it is premature for him to form a definite opinion.

Pb. Government letter No. 1485-ASI-61/7762, dated 1st March, 1961

4. **Report Regarding Integrity.**—A special mention should invariably be made regarding the integrity of the officer to which Government attach the greatest importance. It should be clearly stated if the officer is suspected of corruption or is believed to be corrupt and this opinion should generally be fortified by reasons, which may be in the possession of the reporting officer. Any ill-considered remarks in this respect may do a lot of mischief and harm. On the other hand, the reporting officer must be quite honest and frank and discuss an officer's worth from the point of view of his integrity openly and frankly in the column "Defects, if any" or elsewhere. Government observe that reporting officers are still following the practice of making non-committal remarks the practice of making non-committal remarks like 'no complaints'. Government view this with disfavour and desire that the practice of making non-committal entries in the column relating to integrity should cease. Reporting officers should give a definite opinion on the integrity of their subordinates while writing their confidential reports. Further, instances have come to the notice of Government in which even though officers are being proceeded against for serious forms of corruption, their confidential report for the same periods certify their integrity to be good. It is felt that contradictions of this type arise only because reporting officers are failing in their duty to make entries in the columns relating to integrity forthrightly and without hesitation. In case an officer has been given a good report for integrity which is later proved to be wrong, the reporting officer will run the risk of earning Government's displeasure. Ordinarily, the inference would be that either he did not exercise proper supervision or he was in dishonest collusion with his subordinate. The intention of Government is that the truth about subordinates should be known to reporting officers and brought to the notice of higher authorities. This would not, however, justify the entering of ill-considered remarks based on inadequate observation.

Pb. Government letter No. 8588/-G(C)-56/11533/-GI(S)-56/73580, dated 4th October, 1956

5. **Writing of Annual Confidential Reports on the Secretaries, Joint Secretaries, Heads of Departments, and other Officers working under the State Government.**—(i) The administrative Secretaries to Government will write confidential reports on the Additional Secretaries, Joint Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries and Heads of the Departments, included in their sphere of work. If the work of a Deputy Secretary or below passes through an Additional Secretary or Joint Secretary, the report on the work of the Deputy Secretary or other officer concerned will be initiated by the Additional Secretary/Joint Secretary, as the case may be, and will, thereafter, be put up to the Administrative Secretary for his remarks. In regard to Heads of Departments the Secretary will write the initial remarks though if much work is seen by an Additional or Joint Secretary, the former will consult him before doing so.

Pb. Government letter No. 574 (S)GI-59/5924, dated the 3rd March, 1959

(ii) The Chief Secretary, Minister-in-charge and Chief Minister will be Reporting Authority, Reviewing Authority and Accepting Authority respectively in respect of Administrative Secretaries (including those in Financial Commissioner's & Commissioner's rank).

Haryana Government U.O. No. 30/30/84-(S)I, dated the 29th July, 1985

5(iii) (a) The Minister-in-charge will be reviewing authority in regard to Additional Secretaries, Joint Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries (IAS officers only) and Heads of Departments.

Haryana Government U.O. No. 265-3S-77, dated the 14th February, 1977.

5(iii) (b) The Minister-in-charge will also be the accepting authority in respect of those Under Secretaries who submit their cases direct to the Secretary of the Department concerned without routing them through any Joint/Deputy Secretary. In the case of other officers, the Minister-in-charge would normally be neither a recording nor an accepting authority. He would be competent, however, in any particular case, if he so chooses, to send for the personal file of an officer and record such remarks therein as he considers should be made on the basis of his personal knowledge.

Haryana Government letter No. 6148-3 S-72, dated 30th August, 1972.

5(iv) A Chief Parliamentary Secretary/Deputy Minister/Minister of State (except where he is the Minister-in-charge) will normally have no right of recording/reviewing/accepting of remarks in the annual confidential reports (except in the case of personal staff working under him) and the next higher reporting authority above the level of Administrative Secretary, will be the Minister or Minister of State (where he is the Minister-in-charge). The Minister/Minister of State (where he is the Minister-in-charge) may, where he so desires, before recording his remarks, send the confidential report form to the Chief Parliamentary Secretary/Deputy Minister/Minister of State, as the case may be, for recording remarks. However, in the case of IAS/IPS officers and the officers on the Select List of IAS/IPS, no such reference need be made and the Minister (where he is the Minister-in-charge) shall himself record the remarks.

Haryana Government letter No. 2223-3S-74/8217, dated the 12th April, 1974.

(v) Notwithstanding anything contained in the instructions hitherto issued in respect of Annual Confidential Reports, the Chief Minister, being incharge of General Administration, shall have and shall always be deemed to have had, an inherent right to send for the file of an officer of any department and record such remarks therein as he may deem fit on the basis of his personal knowledge.

Haryana Government letter No. 3103-3S-71, dated the 21st May, 1971.

Explanatory Note.—(i) A Minister or a Minister of State (who held independent charge of any department) who has quit office, will not be competent to record remarks in the confidential report of any officer (including his personal staff). The reports of officers for whom the Minister was the only reporting authority shall be recorded by the Chief Minister.

(ii) The word Minister-in-charge wherever occurring in these instructions would mean Minister who are/were independently in charge of the Departments under their control. It would include Ministers of State, when they hold/held independent charge of any department.

Haryana Government letter No. 8190-3 S-73, dated the 2nd January, 1974.

(iii) A Minister shall not be treated as having demitted office if he continues to be a Minister in the Council of Ministers with a different portfolio or in the Council of Ministers immediately reconstituted after the previous Council of Ministers of which he was a Minister with the same or a different portfolio.

Haryana Govt. letter No. 60-4-87-S(1), dated the 14th August, 1987.

6. Number of Reporting Officers and Powers of Administrative Secretaries to Record Remarks in the Confidential Reports on the Staff under the Heads of Departments.—The work and conduct of an officer working under a Head of Department, whether in the office or in the field, should be reported on by at least two officers. Thus, reports which are initiated by the Heads of the Department himself should be put to the Administrative Secretary for the recording of his remarks.

Punjab Government letter No. 9161-(GI)59/26689, dated the 16th December, 1959.

Explanatory Note.—These instructions do not apply to categories of Government servants such as clerks, stenographers, drivers, etc., who exclusively work under one officer.

Punjab Government letter No. 279-ASI-63/4655, dated the 2nd February, 1963.

7. Minimum period for which a Reporting Officer should have seen the work of a Subordinate before Recording Remarks on him.—No reporting officer should record his remarks in the confidential report of an officer under him unless he has seen his work and conduct for at least three months during the financial year.

Haryana Government letter No. 2784-3S-70, dated 2nd March, 1971.

Explanatory Note.—The period of three months referred to in this paragraph means the period for which the reporting authority has actually seen the work of the officer/official reported on. Besides regular leave (as distinct from casual leave which is treated as duty) the period of suspension when a Government employee does not discharge any duties is not to be counted in calculating this period. Similarly the period, if any, during which the reporting authority is on leave or under suspension is not to be counted.

Haryana Government letter No. 2784-3S-70, dated 2nd March, 1971

8. Recording of Remarks on the occasion of Relinquishment or handing over of Charge by the Reporting authority or by the Subordinate concerned.—(i) If an officer (a) relinquishes the charge of his post during a reporting year on account of his transfer or retirement or (b) one of his subordinates is transferred or retires during the reporting year, such officer may record remarks in the Confidential files of the officer(s) subordinate to him in respect of the relevant period of the reporting year provided he has not recorded such remarks previously in respect of the same reporting year. Such remarks should be recorded by the retiring officer before the date of his retirement. Likewise, the officers relinquishing the charge of his post on transfer should record his remarks at the time of relinquishment of the charge of previous post or within one month thereafter.

Haryana Government letter No. 60/4/87- S (I), dated the 14th August, 1987.

(ii) If there is a change in portfolios, a Minister or a Minister of State (incharge of any Department) may, if he had not done so earlier, record remarks on the Confidential files of officers subordinate to him for the year in which change in portfolios took place. Such remarks should be recorded as early as possible after relinquishing charge of his previous portfolio(s).

Haryana Government letter No. 36/36/81-S(1), dated 3rd February, 1972.

(iii) If the remarks are not recorded by the concerned authorities as per paras 8(i) and 8(ii) above, it shall be obligatory when the annual confidential reports are being written to ask them (except the officers who have already retired) to record their remarks on the confidential reports of those officers/officials in respect of whom these authorities are the initial reporting authorities. If there was a successor in office who is also competent to record remarks as the initial reporting authority, then the remarks of the predecessor (s) in office covered in paras 8(i) and 8(ii) above and the successor in office shall be got recorded in the order of their seniority the junior officer writing the report earlier.

Explanatory Notes.—(i) If the authorities covered under paragraph 8(i) and 8(ii) above request for blank forms for writing the confidential reports, these should be supplied by the same office as is responsible for supplying the forms for annual confidential reports to be written at the end of the year. If the reporting authority is retiring during the reporting year, such blank forms in respect of Government employees in respect of whom the retiring officer is the initial reporting authority, must be supplied by that office on its own to the retiring officer at least one month before the date of his retirement or from the date on which he actually proceeds on leave preparatory to retirement, whichever is earlier. However, the retiring officer will also have the discretion to record his remarks in the case of other employees in respect of whom he is the Reviewing/Accepting authority and in such cases the blank forms may be supplied if so requested by the retiring officer.

(ii) The reports written during the middle of the reporting year should not be forwarded to the successor of the reporting authority, if any, for recording his report but will be submitted for the remarks of the reviewing/accepting authority at the close of the financial year along with the report recorded by the next reporting authority, if any. Thus, these reports will be dealt with only at the end of the year and in the same manner as reports for the entire year.

Haryana Government letter No. 6148-3S-72, dated the 30th August, 1972.

(iii) An officer under suspension is not competent to record confidential reports on the work of his previous subordinates.

Punjab Government letter No. 279-ASI-63/4655, dated 2nd February, 1963.

(iv) An officer who has retired from service will not be competent to record remarks in the confidential reports of officers/subordinates who worked under him.

Haryana Government, letter No. 8367-3S—71/26929, dated 23rd December, 1971.

9. Issue of Letters of Appreciation.—The practice of recognising the good work of an officer by a letter of appreciation is sound and should be adopted by all departments. It is important that such letters should not be issued indiscriminately but this should be sent in really deserving cases to encourage good work and at the end of the prescribed reporting period on an overall assessment of the officer's whole work during the period. The criterion for granting such commendatory letters should be based on a record of exceptionally good work and not merely on the performance of routine duties with more than average ability.

and industry and since commendation will lose much of its value if it is too easily won, it is essential that the greatest care should be taken to limit the number of commendatory letters and to grant them only in cases really deserving of notice.

Punjab Government letter No. 6853-G-37/37890, dated 4th November, 1937.

Explanatory Note.—(i) (a) At least two authorities when there are two or more such competent authorities, should make the recommendation in clear terms; and

Punjab Government letter No. 8965-64/35707, Dated 16th November, 1964.

(b) The work proposed for commendation should be clearly indicated and sufficient details given in support thereof so that the justification for the issuance of appreciation letter could be properly examined.

Haryana Government letter No. 8378-3S-70-3409, dated 17th February, 1971.

(ii) The intention is that, as a rule, such letters of appreciation should, where necessary, be issued by the appointing authority or at least by the authority competent to receive confidential reports convey adverse remarks and maintain the personal file of the officer concerned as defined in paragraph 17 and not by officers lower than that. Officers below the level of the authority competent to maintain the personal file of the officer concerned are not competent to issue letters of appreciation or commendation on the basis of generally good work done by subordinates should appropriately be recorded in annual confidential reports.

(iii) Occasions do arise when an executive officer in the field feels the need of encouraging his subordinates by issuing them letters of commendation, particularly after good work done in connection with some specific incident, e.g. flood relief locusts, visit of some V.I.P., etc., and it is not the intention of Government to place this method of extracting good work out of the subordinates beyond the reach of executive officers in the field. In such cases letters of appreciation may be issued even by officers lower than the appointing authority or the authority competent to receive confidential reports, convey adverse remarks and maintain personal files. Such letters will not, however, be placed on personal files and should be issued very sparingly.

Punjab Government letter No. 8965-64/35707, dated the 16th November, 1964

10. Communication of Adverse Remarks.—Attention is invited to paragraph 7 of Punjab Government Consolidated Circular No. 1 which is reproduced below :—

“the attention of Government of India having been directed to the diversity of procedure followed in different provinces in regard to the communication to subordinate officers in civil employ of unfavourable remarks made by their superiors in annual or other reports of a periodical nature, the Governor-General in Council has, with the approval of the Secretary of State, laid down the following general principles to which effect has to be given in all departments in all provinces :—

- (a) when report is built up on the individual opinions as noted of different departmental superiors in gradation, it is only the opinion as accepted by the highest authority which need be considered from the point of view of communication;
- (b) an officer should not at any time be kept ignorant of the reporting officer's opinion where his service is not considered satisfactory; criticism should be communicated promptly and should indicate in suitable language the nature of the defects in question ;
- (c) the practice of discriminating between a remediable and irremediable defect should be abandoned as far as practicable, except that a certain degree of discretion should be regarded as permissible in communicating reported defects of an irremediable nature. For instance, it might do more harm than good to inform an officer year after year that his brains are below average or that he is unduly sensitive ;
- (d) the reporting officer should specifically state whether the defects reported have already been brought in any other communications to the notice of the officer concerned ;

- (e) remarks in cases in which the Government or head of a department or other officer suspends judgment should not be communicated;
- (f) great attention should be paid to the manner and method of communication in order to ensure that the advice given or the warning of censure administered, whether orally or in writing, shall having regard to the temperament of the officer concerned, be most beneficial to him; and
- (g) any remarks on officer's report which show that he has taken steps to remedy defects to which his attention has been drawn in a previous year, should be communicated to him, so that he may know that his efforts to improve have not passed unnoticed.

Punjab Government letter No. 9026-G-51/6544, dated the 4th December, 1951.

The above instructions should continue to be followed with the modification that adverse remarks in all cases should be communicated. Further, the existing practice of conveying only adverse remarks is rather discouraging and leaves the officer concerned guessing as to the general total purport of his report. To avoid anxiety on this account, Government have also decided to let the officer know briefly (in a sentence or part-sentence) the general total impression of his report. For example, it could be said, 'while your work has been assessed as of a good standard of efficiency and competence, it has been pointed out that you tend to delay cases'; or, 'though your work is generally assessed as satisfactory during the year, you show a communal tendency which is brought to your notice for correction', or 'while you are a hard working officer, you sometimes lose your temper in dealings with the public'.

Explanatory Notes.—(i) It is not the intention that even those adverse remarks which have been washed out by the remarks of some superior authority including Ministers should be conveyed. The correct position is that only the adverse remarks recorded or endorsed by the highest authority reporting on an officer should be communicated. Where however, an adverse remarks has not been specifically denied by a higher authority, it should be conveyed. It is, however, open to that authority to decide that any adverse remarks need not be communicated. Where it is so decided, a specific order to this effect should be recorded. The criterion for such a decision should be based on paragraph 7(c) of Punjab Government Consolidated Circular No. I reproduced above.

Punjab Government Circular letter No. 2679-GI-59/8249, dated the 15th July, 1959.

Remarks which show the overall assessment of the work of an official as 'average' without any other qualifying word or phrase should not be treated as adverse and need not be communicated to him.

Haryana Government letter No. 3103-3S-71, dated 21st May, 1971.

(ii) The reporting officer, while mentioning any defects in the report, should as far as possible also give indication of what efforts have been made by way of guidance, admonition, etc., to get the defects removed and with what results.

(iii) It has been noticed that instructions that adverse remarks in all cases should be communicated to the officer are not being strictly observed with the result that officers are deprived of the right of representation. It has, therefore, been decided that all departments should make it a regular form of routine discipline and procedure to invariably convey adverse remarks to the officer concerned.

Punjab Government Circular letter No. 2679-GI-59/8249, dated the 15th July, 1959.

Although it was provided in Punjab Government circular letter No. 9026-G-51/16544, dated the 4th December, 1951, that an officer should not be kept in the dark about reporting officer's opinion where his service was not considered satisfactory and that criticism should be communicated promptly, yet all Departments do not invariably convey adverse remarks to the officers concerned. Fresh instructions were issued in Punjab Government letter No. 3916-GI-57/9867, dated the 5th June, 1957, that all adverse remarks should be conveyed. The practice of conveying adverse remarks can, therefore, be said to have become strict only on receipt of the letter, dated the 5th June, 1957. The uncommunicated adverse remarks relating to the previous period, however, need not be communicated now.

Punjab Government letter No. 59-ASI-62/5649, dated 17th February, 1962.

All competent authorities should make an occasional check of confidential reports entrusted to their custody in order to ensure that adverse remarks are in fact conveyed to the officers concerned. No notice should be taken in future of adverse remarks if they have not been conveyed. Where a competent authority does not convey adverse remarks

to the officer concerned, the omission will be treated as discriminatory action on its part and due notice will be taken of it in regard to past entries in the personal files, any adverse remarks that have not been conveyed or shown, except those not conveyed or shown when Government's practice of conveying adverse remarks was not as strict as it is now, shall also not be taken into consideration.

Punjab Government letter No. 5515-ASI-61/25297, dated 11th July, 1961.

(iv) The highest reporting authority should be consulted at the time of communication of any adverse remarks if at the time of writing the report his views were not by any chance recorded therein.

Punjab Government letter No. 10935,-G-52/35352, dated 21st December, 1952.

(v) Except to the extent indicated above, confidential reports are not to be communicated or shown to the officer concerned.

Punjab Government letter No. 1485-ASI-61/7762, dated the 1st March, 1961.

(vi) While communicating the adverse remarks to the Government servants the identity of the superior officer making such remarks should not normally be disclosed. If, however, in a particular case, it is considered necessary to disclose the identity of the superior officer the authority dealing with the representation may at his discretion allow the identity to be communicated."

Punjab Government letter No. 8965-ASI-64/35707, dated 16th November, 1964.

11. **Representations against adverse Remarks.**—Government have noticed a strong tendency among officers/officials at all levels not to take adverse remarks in the spirit in which they are intended and as part of the normal incidents of a whole career of service, but to indulge in all kinds of pressure to get such remarks expunged. Such tendency produce ill-effects in regard to the recording of remarks, without fear or favour, by reporting officers, and such practice must be strictly and firmly discouraged and eliminated, if possible. It is often forgotten that the primary purpose of maintaining a record of annual remarks in regard to an officer's work is to accumulate over a period of years a varied assessment regarding the performance, character, ability and integrity of the officer in discharging the responsibilities to which he is called. This record is meant to enable Government to assess the total worth of an individual officer with a view to utilising him in the best way possible for the public service. Primarily, therefore, the record of an officer is a document internal to Government to be utilised for promotions, postings, transfers, encouragement, caution, etc. This main purpose of the record must, therefore, be borne in mind, namely, that it is a cumulative assessment of officer's worth to be utilised for Government purposes and for public ends and it is only incidentally a means of bringing to the officers notice defects which he should consciously endeavour to remedy. Ordinarily, therefore, departments should not enter into any controversy with officers in the matter of adverse remarks communicated to them on the basis of their confidential reports. Occasionally, however, cases arise where the adverse remarks are not made *bonafide* or are based on a patent error of fact. An examination of the representations is, therefore, called for, and these should not be turned down automatically. Where the preliminary examination of the representation does not *prima facie* establish that the adverse remarks are *malafide* or based on a patent error of fact, there should be no hesitation in disposing of the representation on the basis of the general policy referred to above. Where, however, it appears *prima facie* that the remarks are not *bona fide* or that these are based on a clear error of fact, the representation should be examined on merits. If as a result, it is found that the adverse remarks were not justified after obtaining the orders of the highest administrative authority, a note should be recorded on the confidential report expunging the remarks and the officer concerned should be informed of the action taken. The reporting officer may also be informed and suitably warned where *mala fide* intention is indicated. Recourse to expunction of remarks may be had only in cases of exceptional character after observing the procedure laid down above. There may also be border line cases in which there may be some substance in the adverse remarks conveyed to the officer and also some justification for the representation made by the officer against the adverse remarks. In such cases, the proper course to adopt would be to place the representation on the personal file after obtaining the orders of the highest administrative authority.

Punjab Government letter No. 730-GI-58/8250 dated 7th April, 1958,

Punjab Government letter No. 2356-G-55/18471, dated 31st March, 1955.

Punjab Government U. O. No. 15172-G-55, dated the 22nd December, 1955.

Explanatory Notes.—(i) Remarks which are expunged under the orders of the competent authority should be pasted over so that they cannot be deciphered. If, however, remarks are expunged more than one year after they were recorded, the circumstances in which expunction was ordered as well as the earlier remarks should be indicated in a separate folder. That folder should be brought to the notice of the Public Service Commission or other selecting authority concerned when the question of promotion etc., of the official in question is considered. Intimation regarding expunction of remarks should also be sent to the reporting officer(s) concerned in appropriate terms.

Haryana Government letter No. 3103-3S-71, dated 21st May, 1971.

(ii) Before passing final orders on a representation against adverse remarks, the comments of the reporting authority/authorities should invariably be obtained. Final orders on such a representation will be conveyed to the Government employee concerned as far as possible within three months of the date of submission of the representation. The orders so passed shall be final and a second representation against the adverse remarks will not be entertained.

(iii) If a representation is made by any officer against the remarks communicated to him such representation should be brought to the notice of the highest administrative authority and his order should be obtained. It would be very undesirable that an officer against whose adverse remarks representations are submitted should himself dispose of such representations.

Haryana Government letter No. 2784-3S-70, dated 22nd March, 1971.

The intention is that both for purposes of rejection and acceptance of representations against adverse remarks, there should be one authority and it should be the highest/administrative authority.

Punjab Government letter No. 12241-GI-58/1860, dated 21st January, 1959.

"The highest administrative authority means the appointing authority. However, in respect of Class I and Class II Government employees, the 'highest administrative authority' means the appointing authority or the authority to whom representation against the punishment of censure lies under the existing rules of the department concerned for a particular officer, whichever is higher. If in any case, the highest administrative authority himself the authority whose adverse remarks are communicated, the term 'highest administrative authority' should mean the next higher authority."

Haryana Government letter No. 4338-3S-72, dated 24th June, 1972.

"12. Time limit for filing Representation against adverse remarks and the Authorities to whom the Representations are to be addressed.—(i) As stated above, Government do not encourage representations against adverse remarks. Moreover, if a representation is made, it should be entertained only if it is received within three months from the date of receipt of the letter communicating the adverse remarks to the officer/official concerned. Government wish to make it clear that this time limit should be followed rigidly and that time-barred representations should be rejected. It is dangerous to allow officers to go on making representations whenever they think the situation is favourable to them, and *post facto* attempts to improve the personal files must be resisted.

(ii) The representation against adverse remarks may be addressed direct to the authority conveying the adverse remarks.

Explanatory Note.—The letter conveying adverse remarks should be sent by registered post "acknowledgement due" so that the date on which it is received by the officer/official concerned does not admit of any doubt. If the officer/official to whom adverse remarks are to be communicated is posted at the same station, the letter should be delivered to him against an acknowledgement showing the date of receipt.

Haryana Government letter No. 722-3S-71/6676, dated 30th March, 1971.

13. Nature of Documents/Communications which need be placed on Personal Files.—(i) Besides the confidential reports on the work and conduct of an officer, copies of documents/communications specified below should be placed on the personal files :—

- (a) all orders imposing any of the penalties prescribed under Rule 4 of the Punjab Civil Services (Punishment and Appeal) Rules, 1952, or Rule 3 of the All India Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1954, as amended from time to time ;

*Substituted as "45 days" vide Haryana Government letter No. 60/4/87-S(1)-A, dated 14th August, 1987

(b) all communications conveying adverse remarks;

(c) those letters of appreciation which deal with the outstanding nature of performance of an officer on an overall assessment of his work and conduct during the year in the light of the remarks recorded in his confidential reports; and

Punjab Government letter No. 9600-G-55/52409, dated the 24th August, 1955.

(d) a copy of the orders granting advance increment(s).

Punjab Government letter No. 8965-ASI-64/35707, dated the 16th November, 1964.

(e) Special reports recorded on the work and conduct of Government employees on any particular occasion e.g. reports recorded on the expiry of the period of probation or in connection with the crossing of an efficiency bar etc."

Haryana Government letter No. 872-3S-73/5679, dated the 6th March, 1973.

(f) A copy of the order stopping a Government employee at efficiency bar under the provision of Punjab CSR Volume I Part I.

Haryana Government letter No. 493-3S-74/4585, dated the 4th March, 1974.

(g) a copy of notification/letter regarding award of medal to a Government employee in recognition of his service."

Haryana Government letter No. 30/77/79-S(1), dated the 14th March, 1980.

(ii) Warnings, which are not the direct outcome of the annual confidential reports, will also be placed on the personal files, if the warning has been issued under the orders of the Government or any other authority, which is competent to impose a minor penalty on the Government employee concerned, and if it has been specifically directed by the authority issuing the warning that a copy of the warning is to be placed on the personal file.

(iii) In regard to other communications of the nature of advice or conveying displeasure of Government, orders of the competent authority whether or not a copy should be placed in the personal file should be obtained in each individual case. "Competent authority" referred to above will be :—

(a) government in cases where advice given to a Government servant is from Government or the displeasure of Government is conveyed or Government is the authority competent to impose the punishment of censure; and

(b) the authority competent to hear appeals from an order imposing the punishment of censure, in other cases, except when the advice given is that of a higher authority in which case such higher authority should be the "Competent authority."

(iv) Whenever an officer has attended an approved course of study or training in India or abroad :—

(a) the fact of his having done so should be entered in his character roll.

Haryana Government letter No. 8533-3S-71/36835, 21st December, 1971.

(b) the report received from the head of the institution of the aforesaid study or training should either be placed in original with the character roll or the substance of it entered therein.

(c) an entry about the report submitted by the officer on his work should also find mention in the character roll if it is outstandingly good, or is of poor, quality indicating that the officer had not made good use of his period of study or training.

Explanatory Note.—(i) Approved courses of training may be defined to include courses sponsored by the Government or in which the cost or part of the cost is borne by Government as also courses attended with the permission of Government or for which Government grant study leave. In respect of some of these courses it may not be possible or necessary to obtain reports which could be incorporated in the character rolls. For instance there are part time courses and refresher courses where an assessment of the candidate is not made. In such cases, however, entry in the character roll of the fact of the officer having attended the course would nevertheless be useful in giving a more complete picture of the officers' experience and accomplishments.

Punjab Government letter No. 279-ASI-63/4655, dated 2nd February, 1963.

(ii) As a result of delays detected by the Assessment Units, the officials responsible for delays are sometimes warned and in certain cases the Chief Secretary decides that a copy of the warning be placed on the personal file of the official concerned. In such cases it is not necessary to obtain the orders of the competent authority as defined in this paragraph for placing a copy of the warning on the personal file. The Chief Secretary will be the competent authority for this purpose.

Punjab Government letter No. 1485-ASI-61/7762, dated the 1st March, 1961.

(iii) It is the responsibility of the authorities maintaining the personal files to ensure that all documents required under the instructions of the Government to be placed on the personal files, are placed thereon;

(iv) The term 'personal file' means in this context the collection of periodical or annual confidential reports on the work and conduct of a Government employee and copies of orders of punishments and appreciation letters etc., that may, in accordance with the foregoing instructions, form a part of this collection.

Punjab Government letter No. 126-ASI-64/2377, dated 17th January, 1964.

14. Documents which are not to be placed on Personal Files.—The personal files should not be burdened with copies of personal letters or certificates issued by superior officer to their subordinates or letters of commendation issued by Government in recognition of any special help that might have been rendered by the Officer, on a particular occasion, e.g., a local exhibition, visit, of a V.I.P., etc.

Letters of appreciation issued by various authorities or persons on any major event of work done or special contribution made by the officer towards the implementation of a particular scheme or successful conclusion of a special campaign will not, therefore, be placed on personal files.

Punjab Government letter No. 5929 G(C)-56/21125, dated the 30th May, 1956.

Explanatory Note.—Enquiry reports of the Vigilance Department sometimes contain mention of unsubstantiated allegations. In any case these are in the nature of investigations. Such enquiry reports shall not be placed on the personal files.

Punjab Government letter No. 1485 ASI-61/7762, 1st March, 1961.

15. Procedure to be followed where a Reporting Authority is related to the Officer to be reported on.—(i) When the reporting officer is the first reporting authority, he should be competent to record his remarks, but, while doing so, he should clearly mention that he is related to the officer reported on and bring out the exact nature of relationship.

(ii) When the reporting officer is not the original reporting authority he need not normally write any remarks. If, however, he feels that for some reasons he must enter some remarks, he should, while doing so, act as under (i) above.

Punjab Government letter No. 3916/GI-57/9867, dated 5th June, 1957.

16. Soliciting of Remarks to be Discouraged.—Government have noticed an undesirable tendency among officers/officials to approach the higher authorities for getting remarks out of the way on their personal files. The confidential remarks on the work of Government servants are recorded by the competent authority in the normal course when due. The officers/officials should, on no account, solicit for remarks in personal files whether from Ministers or their other superiors.

Punjab Government letter No. 5445-GI-58/15872, dated the 26th May, 1958.

17. Custody of Personal Files and Authorities Competent to convey adverse remarks in Confidential Reports.—In regard to the general question as to which authorities should be competent to receive and convey confidential reports and maintain the personal files (character rolls) of different categories of Government servants it is considered that, in principle all this work should normally be the responsibility of the "appointing authority". However, in view of practical difficulties involved, this does not appear to be feasible in all cases.

Therefore, without prejudice to the right of the "appointing authority" to issue any special instructions to meet administrative exigencies, it has been decided to lay down the following procedure :—

- (i) The personal files of all officers of the I.C.S./I.A.S. and the P.C.S. (Executive Branch) and non-I.C.S./P.C.S. (Executive Branch) Administrative Secretaries will remain with the Chief Secretary, except that the personal file of the General Manager and Secretary, Bhakra Dam, will continue to be maintained by the Secretary, Irrigation and Power.

- (ii) The personal files of Additional Secretaries/Joint Secretaries/Heads of Departments who are not members of the I.C.S./I.A.S./P.C.S. (Executive Branch), will remain in the custody of their Administrative Secretaries.

Punjab Government letter No. 6257/GI-59/1587, dated 13th January, 1960.

- (iii) "The personal files of all class I and class II officers, except those covered by (i) and (ii) above, will remain with the Heads of Departments. The personal files of class I officers will be maintained in duplicate i.e. the personal files containing the original annual confidential reports and other documents will be maintained by the Head of the Department concerned while the duplicate files containing attested copies of the reports and the other documents will be maintained by the Administrative Secretary concerned."

Haryana Government letter No. 1262-3S-73/7754, dated the 22nd March, 1973.

- (iv) The personal files of non-gezzetted staff will remain in the custody of their Heads of Departments/Heads of Offices according to the existing practice, which may be modified if circumstances so warrant, at the discretion of the Head of Department concerned.

Punjab Govt. letter No. 6257-GI-59/1587, dated 13th January, 1960.

The authorities mentioned at (i), (ii) and (iv) above and the Heads of Departments in the case of officers at (iii) above will receive the confidential reports and convey adverse remarks/appreciation on their basis in respect of the Government employees whose personal files are maintained by them."

Haryana Government letter No. 1262-3S-73/7754, dated the 22nd March, 1973.

To facilitate the assessing of an officer's worth, on the basis of his personal file, the good and bad remarks should be sidelined with red and blue pencils, respectively while putting up the personal files in cases of promotion disciplinary action, pension etc.

Punjab Government letter No. 1648-G-56/18571, dated the 14th March, 1956.

Explanatory Note.—(i) "The Personal Files (Annual Confidential Report Files) should be kept in safe custody under lock and key, so that there is no room for their leakage and/or for their being misplaced/lost by the interested persons."

Haryana Government letter No. 5150-3S-73/20236, dated the 14th August, 1973.

Explanatory Note.—(ii) The A.C.R. Files of retired Government employees should be kept for a period of 10 years after their retirement. In respect of those Government employees who resign their appointments or are discharged or dismissed from service or who die while in service, the A.C.R. files should be kept for a period of three years from the date of their resignation or discharge or dismissal or death as the case may be. The files may be destroyed after the aforesaid periods, provided no claim/case is pending in respect of such employees.

Haryana Government letter No. 6148-3S-72 dated 30th August, 1972.

18. Index to Personal Files.—Government observe that very often annual confidential reports are not written promptly by the recording authorities, nor is due importance attached to the proper maintenance of personal files, which are a valuable service record of Government servants. To remedy this state of affairs it has been decided that an index in the attached proforma (Annexure A) should form part of each personal file and entries therein completed before any new documents are filed. To ensure proper upkeep of personal files, it would also be desirable that the appointing authorities/Heads of Department/Heads of Offices have the personal files in their own custody and those in the custody of their subordinate offices inspected by a responsible officer once every year between the months of July and September.

Punjab Government letter No. 6257-GI-59/1587, dated the 13th January, 1960.

Explanatory Note.—Where the personal file is in the shape of a bound register, it is not necessary to prepare an index to it.

Punjab Government letter No. 1485-ASI-61/7762, dated the 1st March, 1961.

19. Summary of Personal Files.—Government have decided that a summary in the attached proforma (Annexure B) should form part of each personal file to facilitate the judging of relative merits of officers by the competent authorities making appointments, promotions, etc.

Punjab Government letter No. 59-ASI-5649, dated 17th February, 1962.

To facilitate this task the grading should be done by the reporting officers. A column for 'overall assessment' should be provided in the form so that the year's work is assessed and graded in the recognised categories namely 'A plus' (outstanding); 'A' (very good); 'B plus' (Good); 'B' (average) and 'C' (Below average).

Punjab Government letter No. 126-ASI-64/2377, dated the 17th January, 1964.

Explanatory Note.—If the overall assessment according to the earlier practice is not as indicated above that is "Outstanding", "V. Good", "Good", "Average", or "Below" Average but is "Satisfactory/Fair" or "Above Average", then the latter assessment should normally be interpreted as equivalent to "Average" and "Good" respectively provided there is no indication to the contrary in the main report itself. If there are instances which will doubtless be exceptional, in which the overall assessment whether in the new categories or in the earlier ones is not consistent with the main report, then the assessment should be suitably modified to conform to the report.

Haryana Government letter No. 3103-3S-71, dated 21st May, 1971.

20. I am to urge again that the officers recording confidential reports should realise the value and the importance of such reports in making or adversely affecting the careers of officers reported upon. While superior officers have the fullest freedom and the right to record their opinion about the work and conduct of their subordinates in doing so they should be guided solely by considerations of merit, justice and fair play. No personal considerations, approaches or *sifarish* of any kind should be allowed to supervene and their conscience alone should be their guide in this matter.

21. I am to request that these instructions should be strictly followed.

Department of

INDEX TO ANNUAL CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS PLACED
IN THE PERSONAL FILE (CHARACTER ROLL) OF _____

N.B.— (1) The Index Form should be printed on both sides of a thick coloured folder.

(2) Each Index Sheet should have a printed Serial No. embossed in print in the right and top corner.

(3) Printed Index Sheets are available from the Controller, Printing and Stationery, Haryana, Chandigarh.

(4) Proper account of Index Sheets should be maintained by each office.

ANNEXURE 'B' (PARA 19)

(1) Name of the Officer with an indication of the Service to which he belongs

(2) Date of entry into the Service

Period covered by the report	Post(s) held	Name(s) with designation(s) of the reporting officers	Whether the report is on the whole, outstanding very good, good, Average or Below Average			Reference to pages	Remarks
			Outstanding/ very good/ good	Average	Below Average		
1	2	3		4		5	6
			(a)	(b)	(c)		

ANNEXURE 'C' (PARA 3)

Confidential reports on the work of the Officers of the Indian Civil Service/Indian Administrative Service for the year _____

Name

Designation

Period spent in the post

Remarks

Overall Assessment (Outstanding, very good, good, average or below average).