

18.17 COMMUNICATION FACILITIES

- 18.17.1 Effective communication is a building block of successful organisations. Managers generally devote much of their time in communicating with their subordinates, colleagues and customers.
- 18.17.2 Communication facilities are considered as an important working tool for public officers making them interact in a timely manner. In the Public Sector, the communication facilities provided to officers include fixed telephone, mobile phone, fax and internet facilities both at workplace and at residence.
- 18.17.3 The facilities provided to officers are on the basis of their status, nature of their work (requirement in the job) or by virtue of posting.

Telephone

- 18.17.4 It rests upon the Responsible/Supervising Officer of the Ministries/ Departments/Organisations to grant to eligible officers telephone facilities such as:
- Free telephone rental (landline)
 - Call entitlement (landline)
 - Free use of mobile phone
 - Mobile phone with unlimited/limited call entitlement
 - Prepaid cards
 - Free rental on mobile phones
 - Roaming facilities on mobile phones
- 18.17.5 The existing arrangements in connection with the provision of facilities related to telephone is considered appropriate and should be maintained. **We recommend accordingly.**

Fax Facilities

- 18.17.6 Fax facilities at place of residence are currently granted to very limited senior public officials – Senior Chief Executives and Permanent Secretaries - on account of their posting and the very special nature of their functions. Ministries/Departments/Organisations should continue to seek the prior authority of the MCSAR before granting such facilities to an officer. **We are maintaining the present provision.**

Internet Facilities

- 18.17.7 The internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks. Internet facilities allow greater flexibility and easy access at work. The low cost and instantaneous sharing of ideas, knowledge, and skills have made work easier and more collaborative.

18.17.8 In the Public Sector, there is a considerable increase of public officers having access to internet facilities at the place of work. A certain category of officers benefit from a monthly internet allowance of Rs 500 for internet facilities at their place of residence.

18.17.9 The internet allowance is granted to an officer who:

- (i) interacts from residence with international organisations for exchange of views, comments and advice regularly outside office hours, having regard to the difference in time zone;
- (ii) regularly carries out significant research from home for normal delivery or to meet deadlines; and
- (iii) accesses from home and outside office hours a server situated at the office or away from home.

Recommendation 1

18.17.10 We recommend that the criteria for eligibility of internet facilities at place of residence be maintained and Ministries/Departments/Organisations should seek the prior authority of the MCSAR before granting such facilities to an officer.

Parastatal Bodies and Local Authorities

18.17.11 The Parastatal Bodies and the Local Authorities generally adopt policies and guidelines, based on the Civil Service pattern, for the grant of communication facilities to their staff. **This arrangement should be maintained.**

Control Mechanism

18.17.12 The prime objective for providing communication facilities to public officers is for an improved efficiency of operations and quality service delivery to the public. It is, therefore, imperative to prevent inappropriate and/or excessive use of these facilities.

Recommendation 2

18.17.13 We recommend that Management of Ministries/Departments/Organisations should exercise proper and adequate control on the grant of communication facilities and ensure that adequate processes and procedures are put in place to prevent inappropriate and/or excessive use of such facilities.
