

16.10 ACTING AND RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

- 16.10.1 The practice of making acting appointments and granting acting allowance is common in the Public Sector. As such, there is need to maintain the acting mechanism since it remains an important management tool to assess an officer's suitability for substantive promotion, particularly in the case of long-term acting. Even in the case of short-term acting arrangements, it provides opportunities for officers to try out their potential to perform duties at a higher rank for staff development purpose.
- 16.10.2 An acting appointment is a non-substantive appointment in which an officer is appointed to undertake the duties of a vacant post. Acting appointments are administrative arrangements made at the discretion of Management. It is not obligatory that acting appointment must be made whenever a post is vacant. On the contrary, an acting appointment may be resorted to whenever there is operational need and where the duties of a vacant post must be undertaken by another officer.
- 16.10.3 For this review, the main representations received relate to a review of our recommendations in respect of the grant of acting allowance as such an allowance should be granted to recognise the additional duties and responsibilities shouldered by the officers who undertake such acting appointment over a long period of time. Request has also been made to the effect that all officers who are appointed to act or assigned duties in higher positions be eligible to all the benefits attached to the higher post after a continued period of actingship of at least four months.
- 16.10.4 After examining the submission, we are, in this Report bringing minimal change to the existing provisions.

Acting Allowance

Recommendation 1

- 16.10.5 We recommend that the quantum of acting allowance to be paid, irrespective of a grade-to-grade or class-to-class situation, should represent the difference between the initial or flat salary of the higher post and the substantive salary of the officer, provided the allowance is not less than three increments worth at the incremental point reached in the substantive post. In case of overlapping of salary scales, the allowance should be equivalent to three increments worth at the incremental point reached in the substantive post provided the total emoluments of the officer should not be more than the maximum salary of the higher post.**

Responsibility Allowance

16.10.6 A responsibility allowance is paid to an officer who is assigned, for administrative convenience, the duties of a higher post and where the latter grade is normally filled by selection from among serving officers and/or from among candidates outside the service.

Recommendation 2

16.10.7 We recommend that the appointee should be paid a responsibility allowance as per the following conditions:

- (i) the allowance is equivalent to the acting allowance when he is fully qualified to act in the higher post;**
- (ii) when he is not fully qualified to act in the higher post, the allowance is equivalent to 80% of the acting allowance; and**
- (iii) when appointment to a higher office is made by selection and no additional qualification is required, whether in terms of academic or technical qualification or experience or in terms of physical requirements, the allowance is equivalent to the acting allowance.**

Qualifying Periods/Specific Provisions

16.10.8 At present, acting or responsibility allowance is paid to an officer who has acted in the higher office for a continuous period of at least seven days except for an officer who has acted in an Accounting/Responsible Officer position where the actingship is payable for even a period of three consecutive days or more. The MPSAIR has submitted that when an officer who is performing higher duties has proceeded on leave for a period of absence not exceeding seven days at a stretch, he would continue to be paid the acting or responsibility allowance. This, therefore, entails double payment of the allowance. The MPSAIR has requested that the qualifying period for eligibility for payment of the allowance should be reviewed for an officer performing higher duties such that he should not be paid the allowance for any absence of seven days at a stretch. We are recommending accordingly.

Recommendation 3

16.10.9 We recommend that the qualifying period/specific provisions governing Acting and Responsibility Allowance should be as follows:

- (i) Acting or Responsibility allowance is paid to an officer who acts in the higher office for a continuous period of seven days, that is, the assignment should be for at least seven continuous days, inclusive of Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays except for those who act in an Accounting/Responsible Officer position where the actingship is payable even if the period of actingship is less than seven days;**
- (ii) no Acting or Responsibility Allowance is paid to an officer, performing higher duties, for any period of absence of seven days at a stretch;**

- (iii) where an officer who is acting in a higher office proceeds on official mission overseas, he is paid a special allowance equivalent to the Acting Allowance he would have drawn had he not gone on mission;
- (iv) an officer, who is acting in an Accounting/Responsible Officer position for a period of at least three consecutive days or more but less than seven days, is paid 80% of the normal Acting/Responsibility Allowance payable for the period in the normal circumstances. No formal actingship or payment is made for a period of less than three days; and
- (v) an officer, who has been appointed to act or assigned duties in an Accounting/Responsible Officer position by the relevant Service Commission or Board *vice* permanent vacancies or *vice* temporary vacancies which would eventually become permanent, should be eligible for all benefits attached to the post after a continued period of actingship of at least four months except Car Benefits which should be in line with paragraph 16.2.121 of Volume 1 of this Report.

Responsibility Allowance to Employees in the Workmen's Group

- 16.10.10 In line with government policy to cater for people at the lower echelon, there is need to make special provisions in order to adapt to their needs.
- 16.10.11 Representations have been received to the fact that employees other than the Workmen's Group are eligible to the equivalent of 80% of the acting allowance in case an appointee is not fully qualified to act in the higher post whereas for employees of the Workmen's Group, this is not the case. Hence, for equity and fairness, the 80% of the acting allowance should be equally applicable to the employees of the Workmen's Group.
- 16.10.12 The Bureau considers that some special measures are essential in order to decrease the gap between low income earners and high income earners. Further, the quantum payable as Responsibility Allowance to employees in the Workmen's Group is meagre and a further reduction of same might not motivate employees to shoulder higher responsibility. Thus, we are continuing with the present arrangement.

Recommendation 4

16.10.13 We recommend that the Responsibility Allowance payable to employees in the Workmen's Group should be computed:

- (i) on the same basis as for acting allowance even if the employee is not fully qualified;
- (ii) for the full period of actingship (inclusive of Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays) whenever the period of actingship exceeds such continuous days; and
- (iii) on the basis of the actual number of days worked in case the actingship is less than seven days.
