

## **Nationality Instructions**

### **Procedural section**

#### **Files**

##### **1. Files - Types of**

1.1 Files were introduced in the Home Office in the late 19th century. Before that, incoming papers were generally folded in four and the action noted on the back.

##### **1.2 Personal**

1.2.1 These files have the prefix IMP (Immigration Personal - ALP prior to September 1962) and are green in colour. Prior to September 1985, yellow (known as white) and green file covers were used to distinguish between Commonwealth and foreign national cases respectively.

1.2.2 Personal files are normally created on the basis of the initial letter of the head of the family's principal name and are numbered sequentially within the alphabetical series. The head of the family is normally the husband/father and papers relating to his wife and children will be registered to this file.

1.2.3 A separate file is raised for persons over 18 years of age (nationality casework) and 16 years (immigration casework). Previous and/or related papers are noted in the 'related papers' box on the front cover of the file.

1.2.4 Exceptions to the general rule include Vietnamese and cases of adoption and where the head of the family is a British citizen.

1.2.5 File covers often contain authenticated details of the subject e.g.:

- Nationality status, in the top right-hand corner of the names box (where the registrar has seen the subject's passport)
- Stateless and East European (except of Chinese origin and Yugoslavs) files are marked with a red "X" on the front cover of the file

1.2.6 Personal details on files should be not altered or added to except by the Registrar, to whom all changes should be notified on file.

##### **1.3 Policy**

1.3.1 These files are buff in colour and the prefix now in use is NY (Nationality General). (Previously they were ALN, GEN or NTY)

1.3.2 Registration is on a subject matter basis. The prefix denotes the series; the year in which the file was opened; and the first 2 numbers the 2 main subject areas under which the file has been registered. The lowest number is always shown first. The third number indicates the sub number.

##### **1.4 MPs' cases**

1.4.1 An MP's case is identified by a green band around the edge of the file front together with the words "HOME OFFICE MINISTER'S CASE" in green in the top centre of the file cover. The file number contains the suffix "(S)".

## **1.5 Prime Minister's cases**

1.5.1 The file cover is green with the words "PRIME MINISTERS' CASE" in large black letters a third of the way down on the front.

## **1.6 Parliamentary Questions**

1.6.1 The file cover is yellow with the words "PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION" in black at the top. In the upper right-hand corner there is an integral flag marked "PQ to be" and underneath "answered". When the question has been answered the top part of the flag is torn off, leaving the word "answered".

## **1.7 Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration cases**

1.7.1 The file cover is red and stamped boldly in black "PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION CASE". As with the Parliamentary Question file, it has a flag (marked "PCA case to be" and underneath "answered") the upper part of which is removed once the action has been completed.

## **1.8 Immigration appeal cases**

1.8.1 The file cover is pink with a red band along the length of the gusset. The words "APPEALS CASE" appear in bold red print in the top right-hand corner.

## **1.9 Conviction and deportation cases**

1.9.1 The file cover is dark blue.

## **1.10 Naturalisation applications**

1.10.1 All such applications are registered to a white file. Until March 1982, joint applications from husband and wife were given separate sub files. Now such applications are placed on the same sub file, as are children under 18 years of age.

## **1.11 Asylum applications**

1.11.1 Asylum applications lodged after 1 January 1993 are registered to a bright yellow file with the word ASYLUM printed in bold block capitals on the top right hand side of the file. Applications for asylum made before 1.1.93 will not be re-skinned. Any asylum-related appeals will continue to be placed on a pink appeals sub.

## **1.12 Classified files**

1.12.1 Security classifications are shown boldly in red in the centre at the top and bottom and front and back of the file cover. The Security endorsement on the file cover must accord with the highest classification of the documents in the file (see paragraph 2 below)

### **1.13 Files - blue and white tape**

1.13.1 It is important that the correct colour of the tape is used to tie together 2 or more files:

- White tape - should be used for tying together sub-numbers of the same file
- Blue tape - should be used when 2 or more files from different series are being tied together

1.13.2 Where 2 files are about the same person but have different file numbers they should be tied together with blue tape. Priority should be given to having the files amalgamated at an early date.

1.13.3 Where a bundle of several files contains some in the same series, the like numbers should be tied together in white tape and the whole bundle secured with blue tape. Failure to comply with this simple procedures makes it difficult to locate files and may even result in a file being put away in the wrong bundle in the paper room.

1.13.4 If a bundle of files of different numbers or different series is too bulky to be tied securely by tape, a white strap should be used and blue tape tied prominently around the strap. TAPE SHOULD NOT BE TIED IN A KNOT.

1.13.5 Where an attached file is of smaller dimensions, (e.g. from another Government Department), it should be enclosed in a clearly identifiable envelope and tied securely with blue tape. When action is complete, any blue tape should be removed before files are sent to layby.

## **2. Files - Classified papers**

2.1 Classified papers must be handled at all times in accordance with the instructions set out in the Handbook 'Security in the Home Office'. All staff are required to read either the 'Departmental Security Instructions' or 'Security in the Home Office' once a year and to certify that they have done so. The security classification on a document or file should not be divulged to persons outside the Department.

### **2.2 Security (Protective Mark) classifications and descriptors**

2.2.1 The 4 main security classifications are:

TOP SECRET  
SECRET  
CONFIDENTIAL  
RESTRICTED

2.2.2 To reinforce the "need to know" principle, by indicating the nature of the sensitivity involved, and limiting access accordingly, descriptors may be used with the security classification, e.g.:

RESTRICTED-STAFF-NOT FOR DISCLOSURE

CLASSIFIED-MANAGEMENT

SECRET-POLICY

2.2.3 With the exception of "PERSONAL", descriptors should not be used without a Protective Mark. Material formerly classified as "in confidence" now has a Protective Marking "RESTRICTED".

### **2.3 Responsibility for classifying a document or file**

2.3.1 The decision to classify a document or file is one for the handling directorate. Advice may be sought from the Directorate Security Officer or Security Branch, Grenadier House, if appropriate.

### **2.4 Care of classified papers**

2.4.1 RESTRICTED - NOT AVAILABLE FOR DISCLOSURE

2.4.2 RESTRICTED - NOT AVAILABLE FOR DISCLOSURE

2.4.3 RESTRICTED - NOT AVAILABLE FOR DISCLOSURE

2.4.4 The practice of taking classified documents home is to be discouraged but may at times be unavoidable. Officers should be fully aware of the instructions laid down in 'Security in the Home Office'. Any officer who has occasion to take classified documents out of the office should:

- ensure that they have the necessary authority; and
- use a security briefcase or container appropriate to the classification of the documents concerned; and
- ensure that a written record of the papers taken out is left in the office

### **2.5 Transmission of classified papers and files**

2.5.1 It is important that officers are familiar with, and follow at all times, the rules for the transmission of classified documents, as set out in 'Security in the Home Office'. When classified files are passed by hand from one officer to another and the recipient is absent from his desk they must not simply be left on it. They should either be brought back later when the officer is there to receive them or handed to a colleague who is prepared to look after them in the meantime.

## **3. Files – Handling**

### **3.1 Files in cupboards**

3.1.1 An officer who finds it necessary to keep files in a cupboard which is normally locked - and this should only be necessary where classified files are being held for current action - should keep an up-to-date list of the files readily available.

### **3.2 Files on which action is complete**

3.2.1 The correct place for a file on which action has been completed is the Paper Room. A file on which no further action is required should be minuted "Lay By", by the officer concerned and marked "Lay By" on the front of the file cover. To reduce the possibility of a file being sent to an incorrect destination, no abbreviation or form of direction other than 'Lay By' should be used. A file with outstanding intermediate action should not be double-routed on the file cover (e.g.: 1. Policy Section 2. Lay By): rather this should be clearly indicated on the minute sheet and the file cover

marked to the initial location only. This procedure should ensure that no outstanding action is overlooked.

3.2.2 Particular care should be taken to ensure that no document remains on file which rightly should have been returned to its sender. Where it is necessary for a passport or other document to be retained on a file which is being sent to 'Lay By', a clear indication to this effect should be made by the caseworker in the final minute. The document should be placed in a sealed envelope at the top of the file, and a note attached to the effect that the document is to be retained on file. If this action does not appear to have been followed, the file will be returned by Registry to the caseworking group.

3.2.3 Files relating to different persons or subjects which are travelling together should be separated by the caseworker before being sent to Lay By (but see paragraph 1.13.6 regarding the possible need to notify System Support Group).

3.2.4 Officers should not build up their own 'private collections' of files as this can increase the possibility of papers being lost.

3.2.5 Drafts should be removed from files before they are sent to Lay By unless it is important to keep them (e.g. a draft which may be used in the future).

### **3.3 Despatch of files to other departments and directorates**

3.3.1 When the intended recipient of a file is at a location served by the IDS van service, a file addressed to another part of the Home Office or another Government Department should be sent by van. Where it is not possible to send a file by van, the file should be placed in a suitable envelope, marked with the recipient's full address, and sent by recorded delivery post.

3.3.2 The terms of the postal contract allow us to despatch by second class post items up to 1000 grams in weight. The first class service is used only for urgent and/or heavier items and, where specifically required, this should be indicated clearly within the destination box for files being transmitted via Despatch Section, or on the envelope or envopak of those sent direct to the Post Room.

3.3.3 Files being sent to non-IND/IS locations, except those sent for police interview by Despatch Section should be routed through Outclerks (see paragraph 4.2.8).

### **3.4 Files - Care of**

3.4.1 Files and papers should not be allowed to become tattered and torn. Most files have an outer flap to protect the papers within and full use should be made of this to safeguard the minute sheets as well as the other contents of the file. Documents should be placed on files so that they do not protrude at the top or bottom of the file cover. Where this is not possible because of the size or bulk of the documents, the file and the bulky papers should be sent to the relevant registrar with a request that they be treated as 'Long Papers'. The registrar will then obtain from Archives Section, QAG, a Long Papers reference number which will be recorded on the file and index slip before the enclosure is sent to the repository for storage.

3.4.2 Where a file or sub becomes worn or torn, is more than one inch thick and/or contains more than about 100 documents, it should be sent to the appropriate Special, General or Personal Sub Registry for repair and/or the opening of a

continuation file. All pins, paperclips etc should be removed from papers after they have been linked to the file.

### **3.5 Personal documents kept on files**

3.5.1 These must be treated with great care and kept in the enclosure pouch. They should never, on any account, be punched or pinned. Nor should they be written on, except that all passports should have the file number entered in ink inside the back cover, and the file number may be pencilled lightly on the back of an original document being sent for translation (see TRANSLATIONS). Letters from employers, schools etc, which have been obtained especially for the purpose of a citizenship application may be tagged on file and retained.

### **3.6 Punching of forms, letters etc**

3.6.1 The correct place to punch these is about one-third of the way down. Papers that are punched too low or too high become tattered at the top or bottom where they hang out of the file, and bits may get torn off. Similarly, if a letter is not punched far enough in, its edge may get worn so that it eventually slips out of the file.

### **3.7 Personal details**

3.7.1 If, on the outside of the file, the name is incorrectly spelt or the date of birth is wrong, the mistake should be corrected on file tracking.

### **3.8 Re-registering and re-numbering personal files**

3.8.1 If the subject of a personal file changes his/her name, either:

- a fresh file is raised in the new identity, giving details of the original file in the "Related papers" box; or
- the person's details are included as an "associated person" on the original file, together with a new barcode

### **3.9 Amalgamation of personal files**

3.9.1 When two or more different-numbered files exist for the same person, or when a separate file has been opened (e.g. for a wife who should be on the same file as her husband), the files should be sent to ITTSG with a minute asking for the files to be amalgamated. If possible this should always be done before work on the case is begun. In a very urgent case it may be possible to arrange for the amalgamation by telephone.

### **3.10 Related papers box**

3.10.1 All files have a "related papers" box on the front cover. The numbers of files travelling together as live cases or which contain information necessary for the consideration of those cases should be entered in this box.

### **3.11 Citizenship applications - files required by other directorates**

3.11.1 If a file with an outstanding citizenship application on it is released to another directorate, it should first be prominently flagged with the yellow "NOT TO BE LAID BY" label.

3.12 For flagging of files generally, see MINUTES AND MEMORANDA.

#### **4. Registry organisation**

4.1 Finance & Services Directorate is responsible for the registration of correspondence to files. A private contractor, Britannia Data Management (BDM) Ltd, is responsible for the custody of IND's 6 million files. Line Management responsibility for Registry lies with an SEO, 2 HEOs and an EO in each of the sections listed below.

#### **4.2 Registry comprises the following areas:**

The Mail Handling Section

##### **4.2.1 The Mail Handling Section:**

- scans and sorts incoming mail
- records incoming and outgoing recorded delivery mail and answers related enquiries
- opens all mail which is not personally addressed
- forwards all mail to the appropriate unit
- sorts, weighs and bags all outgoing mail prior to collection

The ICD Initial Consideration Unit

##### **4.2.2 The Initial Consideration Units:**

- raise new white files as appropriate
- validate immigration application forms
- process applications for variations of leave, EEA applications, transfer of conditions and "no time limit" requests, and diplomatic and other exemption cases
- decide valid immigration applications (etc) suitable for fast track action
- refer extended cases to CAU for referral to CMUs
- correct double files and creation errors
- provide contact points for various external organisations
- reviews policy on, and revises, immigration application forms

ICU Support Unit

##### **4.2.3 The ICU Support Unit:**

- raises new white files as appropriate
- processes completed PCU regional PEO call notes for storage
- provides point of contact on file creation and name searches
- corrects double files and repairs personal files
- barcodes personal files

##### **4.2.4 RESTRICTED - NOT AVAILABLE FOR DISCLOSURE**

IND MPs' Correspondence Section (MPCS)

#### 4.2.5 Formerly Secretary of State's Clerks (see MPs' CORRESPONDENCE)

#### Special Registry

#### 4.2.6 Special Registry consists of 3 sections:

- Appeals Section - The Appeals Section is responsible for registering to distinctive pink Appeals files, or subs, papers relating to Home Office Internal Appeals, Port Appeals and ECO (Entry Clearance Officer) Appeals. Appeals Registry also acts as a transit point (for staff in Croydon) for the despatch to, and return of files from the regional Presenting Officers' Units (POUs)
- Outclerks - Outclerks are responsible for recording and monitoring the referral and return of Immigration and Nationality Directorate files to and from other Government Departments. All personal files (excepting those classified CONFIDENTIAL or above and those sent for police interview via Despatch Section) referred to locations outside IND/IS should be routed out and back via Outclerks (Room 1022) so that up-to-date records can be maintained
- Special Almanack - Special Almanack Section is responsible for maintaining records of personal files (including those classified RESTRICTED) which are to be brought forward at a later date for action or review by the caseworking group.

#### 4.2.7 RESTRICTED - NOT AVAILABLE FOR DISCLOSURE

#### File Review Section

4.2.8 The File Review Section is responsible for examining the Department's personal files with a view to determining, according to certain criteria, which should be preserved and which destroyed.

#### The Paper Rooms

#### 4.2.9 RESTRICTED - NOT AVAILABLE FOR DISCLOSURE

4.2.10 Detailed arrangements for the storage and retrieval of files by BDM staff are set out in a series of IND notices issued by Finance and Services Directorate, copies of which, where not held by individual groups or sections, may be consulted in INPD(L) Policy Section.

#### Divisional Searchers

4.2.11 The Divisional Searchers are a team of one Senior Paperkeeper and 7 Paperkeepers whose main task is to link correspondence with files which are not in the paper room or the appropriate group. Requests for their assistance in locating

- missing files (see below) with current markings, or
- missing passports, or
- correspondence items which have been sent to caseworking groups accompanied by forms RGY 1,

should be made on HEO's signature via the Chief Paperkeeper, Room 827, or the Senior Paperkeeper, Divisional Searchers, Room 831, in the Chief's absence.



4.2.12 Local searches may be arranged through Management Support Unit.

4.3 Current information on the allocation of work within Registry may be found in the 'Finance and Services Directorate Organisation and Staff List', which is updated periodically.