



Records Management and Registry Policy

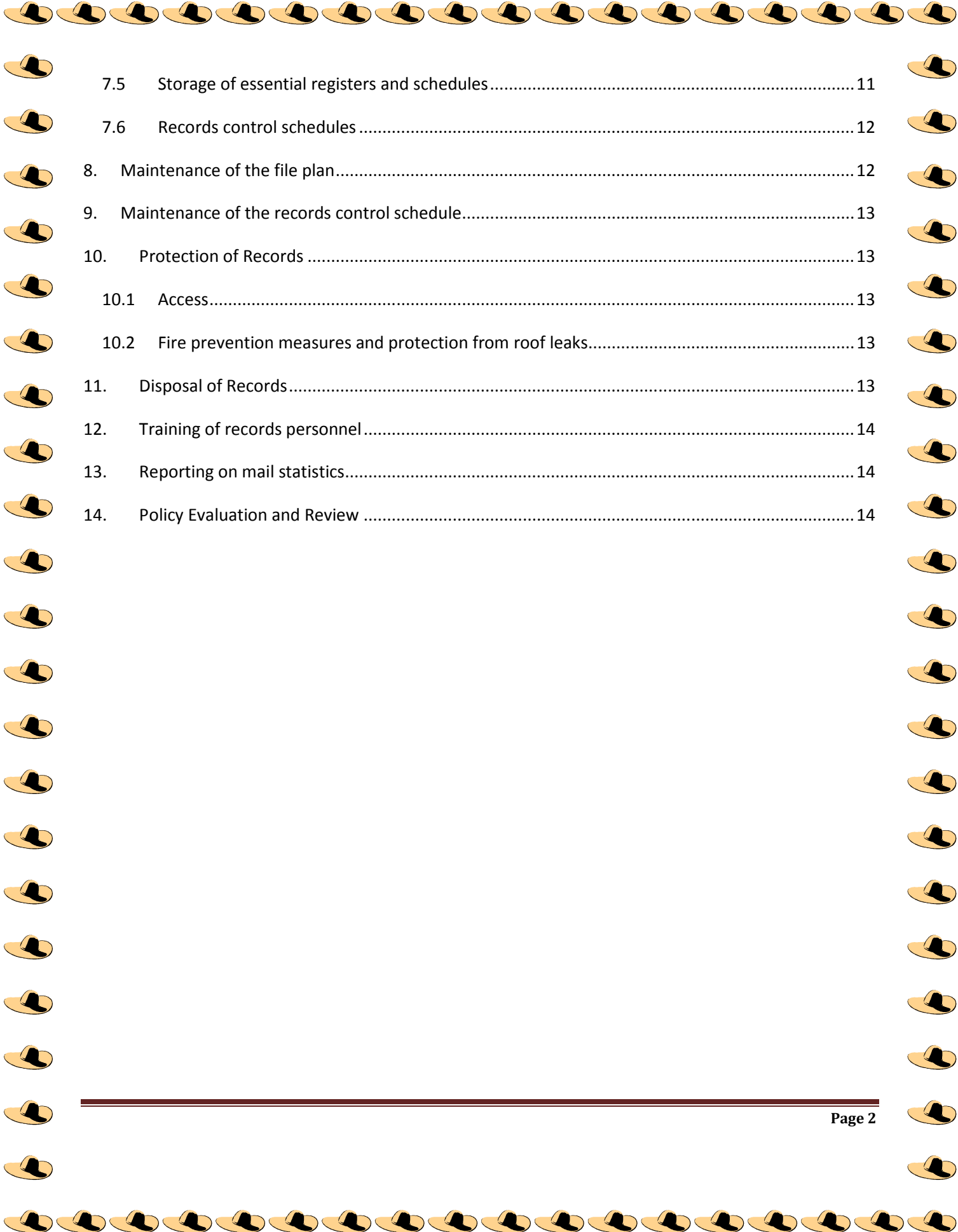




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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Registry office is responsible for controlling all channels of communication which also enables an organization to perform its functions properly.
- 1.2 The Registry office keeps all the records developed and/or received by the Municipality.
- 1.3 The registry policy serve as a guiding tool to all officials entrusted with the responsibility of creating correspondences within the institution. The manual is used to outline the correct procedure regarding treatment of incoming and outgoing correspondence.
- 1.4 Like other resources of people, machinery and equipment, Molemole Municipality places a high regard for its information resource. This policy is an affirmation that the municipality is committed to managing its information resources in a way that that will enhance its strategic value.

2. Purpose and Objectives of the policy

- 2.1 To ensure all correspondence received by the municipality is safeguarded and processed according to the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act. 1996.
- 2.2 To ensure a consistent and uniform procedure is followed when filing, delivering and archiving correspondence
- 2.3 To keep control of correspondence's movement within municipal departments
- 2.4 To ensure that correspondence addressed to the municipality is timeously delivered to relevant addressees.
- 2.5 To ensure confidentiality of all incoming mail and ensure that all items reach the intended recipients in the same quantity
- 2.6 To promote a sound records management practice and eliminate unnecessary duplication of records.
- 2.7 To ensure a proper control, monitoring and storage of municipal records so as to reduce vulnerability to litigations and financial loss.

3. Legislative Provisions

3.1 The following legislative frameworks will form the basis for application of this Policy:

- a. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996
- b. Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000
- c. Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000
- d. Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998
- e. National archives and records service of South Africa act Act no. 43 of 1996



4. Scope

This policy shall impact upon Molemole Municipality's work practices for all those who:

- 4.1 Create records including electronic records
- 4.2 Have access to Municipal records
- 4.3 Have any other responsibilities for records like storage, maintenance and disposal of correspondence

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 **The Department of Corporate Services**, through the Senior Administration Officer, shall be the implementing authority of this policy, and shall facilitate its annual revision.
- 5.2 **The Messenger** – will collect and deliver the mailbag on a daily basis.
- 5.3 **The Registry Clerk** – responsible for sorting, opening and delivering mail to respective departments. He/she is also responsible for assigning file numbers to correspondence for ease of filing. He/she must also make sure that all faxes received are captured in the computer program designed specifically for that. He/she must then submit a daily register of all incoming mail to Head of Administration.
- 5.4 **The Archive Clerk** – is responsible for filing, closing, disposing and archiving files according to the
- 5.5 **The Admin Officer** will open the mailbag in the presence of two designated officials. He/she will always keep the mailbag keys.
- 5.6 **IT Officer** – Responsible for the day to day maintenance of electronic systems that stores records. He/she will work with the Registry office to ensure that public records are properly managed, protected and appropriately preserved for as long as they are required for business, legal and long-term preservation purposes. He/she will also ensure that electronic systems remains accessible by migrating them to new hardware and software platforms when there is a danger of technology and format obsolescence.
- 5.7 **The Head of Administration** – must keep the duplicate keys of the mailbag

6. Storage Areas

- 6.1 All correspondence, both paper-based and electronic must be housed in the central registry or a properly designated office.
- 6.2 Only duly authorized personnel are allowed in the registry office.



7. Registry procedure

7.1 Procedure regarding the handling of mailbag

- 6.1.1. The mailbag is collected in the morning at 09h00 by a Messenger from the Post office.
- 6.1.2. Post is sorted and appropriately dispatched, while outgoing post is sealed and stamped.
- 6.1.3. The mailbag is returned to the post office at 15h00 with the outgoing post. The mailbag should remain in the post office until the following morning.
- 6.1.4. The key for the mailbag is stored safely in the office of Admin Officer while the duplicate key is kept by the Head of Administration.

7.2 Receipt, Sorting and Opening of post

7.2.1 Receipt of mailbag

- a. When mailbag is collected from post office it has to be carried in a sealed bag. Thus mailbags are always sealed by the post office prior to their delivery.
- b. When the mailbag is received in registry, it must be opened and emptied by the Admin Officer in the presence of the Registry Officer and Archive Clerk
- c. Both of these officials must receive written instructions from the Head of Administration or an appropriately delegated official entitling them to receive and open post, and note details of all remittances or negotiables in the remittance register, received by post, fax or otherwise. These written instructions should be filed on the personal files of the relevant official(s).
- d. In cases where one or both of the officials mentioned in par.4.2.1(c) are not present or for any reason cannot open the post, permission for this task must be delegated in writing by the office head to other officials.
- e. Under no circumstances may only one person open post. Messengers are not permitted to help with the opening of post.
- f. Incoming post is opened once a day at 09h30. All officials' post and letters received before the post is being opened must be kept safely by the Admin Officer in her/his office.
- g. However post which is marked **URGENT, AS WELL AS TELEGRAMS, TELEX MESSAGES OR EXPRESS** should be attended to immediately on receipt.



7.2.2 Sorting of post

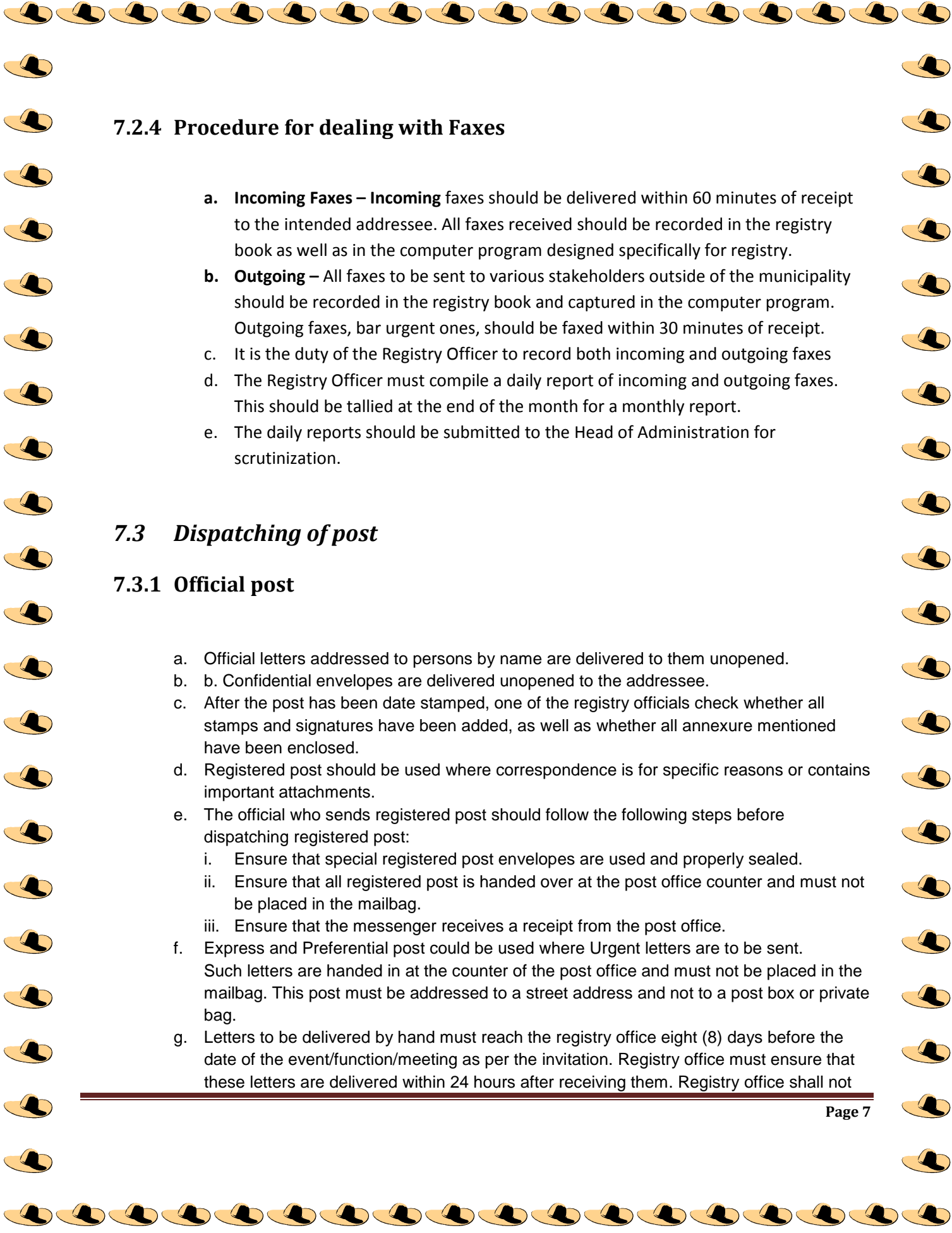
- a. If an official envelope is marked for the attention of a particular person, it is opened by the registry personnel and dealt with in the usual manner. This means the letter cannot be treated as a private mail.
- b. Secret and confidential envelopes are delivered unopened to the Head of Administration. After these items have been handed over to the above mentioned official, registry accepts no further responsibility for them.

7.2.3 Procedure for opening post

- a. Envelopes containing tenders should be given to officials dealing with Tenders.
- b. Envelopes of unclaimed/ undeliverable letters are attached to the letter to be returned to the post office
- c. Post is opened by at least two registry officials from 9h30 to 10h30. Post is opened only on the specified times and should be moved as quickly as possible to the relevant officials.
- d. Envelopes are slit open on the two sides to ensure that all the contents have been removed and once emptied the envelopes are immediately disposed of in the wasted bin.

Treatment of attachments and annexure

- e. After the letters have been removed from the envelopes, they must be opened immediately and read to ensure that any annexures and monies referred to have actually been enclosed.
- f. If such items are missing, this must be neatly noted in the margin of the letter and initialed.
- g. In cases where money is missing or the amount differs from that mentioned in the letter, both officials present must initial the **NOT ON THE LETTER**. At the same time, loose annexures must be tied with a string.
- h. When attaching documents care must be taken with original documents that are valuable to the sender, e.g. educational certificates that they are not damaged by pins or anything else.
- i. Registered and certified postal articles are treated in the same manner as ordinary post.
- j. Incoming parcels are opened and dealt with in the same manner as incoming post.
- k. Incoming personally delivered post is kept by the Admin Officer until the right time for opening post.
- l. Incoming telegrams, telex messages and express letters should immediately be opened by the Admin Officer in front of all officials opening the post.
- m. The Admin Officer must then decide whether the article(s) should be delivered with or without the relevant file. If the file is not immediately available, the article must be shown to the official concerned and her further instructions be obtained thereon. The files to which such items are attached must be delivered immediately by hand to the official for whom it is meant.



7.2.4 Procedure for dealing with Faxes

- a. **Incoming Faxes – Incoming** faxes should be delivered within 60 minutes of receipt to the intended addressee. All faxes received should be recorded in the registry book as well as in the computer program designed specifically for registry.
- b. **Outgoing** – All faxes to be sent to various stakeholders outside of the municipality should be recorded in the registry book and captured in the computer program. Outgoing faxes, bar urgent ones, should be faxed within 30 minutes of receipt.
- c. It is the duty of the Registry Officer to record both incoming and outgoing faxes
- d. The Registry Officer must compile a daily report of incoming and outgoing faxes. This should be tallied at the end of the month for a monthly report.
- e. The daily reports should be submitted to the Head of Administration for scrutinization.

7.3 *Dispatching of post*

7.3.1 Official post

- a. Official letters addressed to persons by name are delivered to them unopened.
 - b. Confidential envelopes are delivered unopened to the addressee.
 - c. After the post has been date stamped, one of the registry officials check whether all stamps and signatures have been added, as well as whether all annexure mentioned have been enclosed.
 - d. Registered post should be used where correspondence is for specific reasons or contains important attachments.
 - e. The official who sends registered post should follow the following steps before dispatching registered post:
 - i. Ensure that special registered post envelopes are used and properly sealed.
 - ii. Ensure that all registered post is handed over at the post office counter and must not be placed in the mailbag.
 - iii. Ensure that the messenger receives a receipt from the post office.
 - f. Express and Preferential post could be used where Urgent letters are to be sent. Such letters are handed in at the counter of the post office and must not be placed in the mailbag. This post must be addressed to a street address and not to a post box or private bag.
 - g. Letters to be delivered by hand must reach the registry office eight (8) days before the date of the event/function/meeting as per the invitation. Registry office must ensure that these letters are delivered within 24 hours after receiving them. Registry office shall not
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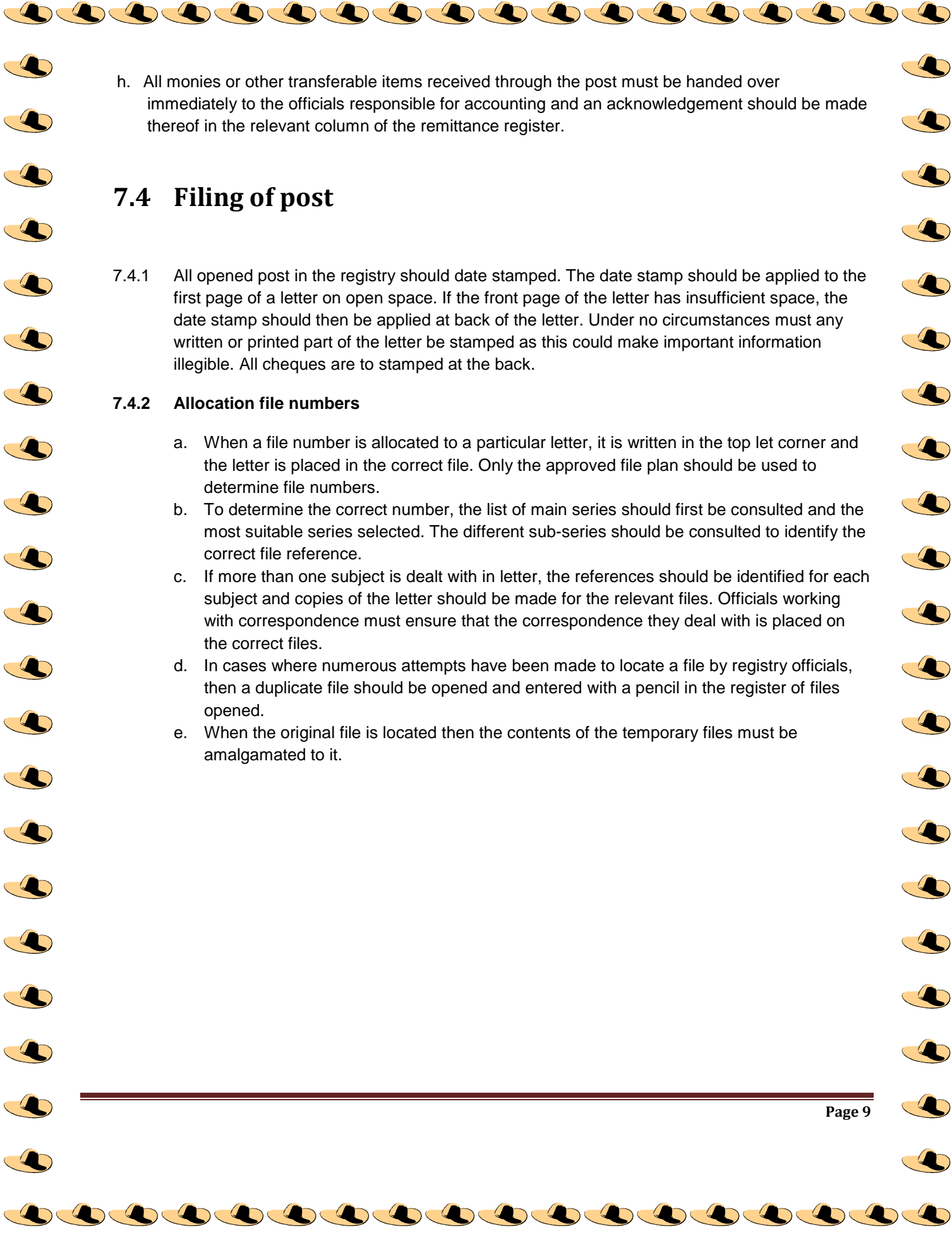
be held accountable for late delivery of correspondence as a result of unavailability of the addressee or late submission of correspondence by the addressor.

7.3.2 Incoming Private Post

Private letters that are received are placed unopened in pigeon hole according to sections. It is the responsibility of the addressee to collect his/her private post. The registry accepts no responsibility for private post at all.

7.3.3 Receipt and handling of remittance/transferable items

- a. Letters enclosed with money or transferable items must be opened and recorded in the register meant for such items. In the said register the following information must be recorded;
 - i. Date of receipt
 - ii. Whether received by ordinary or registered post
 - iii. Details of the sender
 - iv. Nature of the remittance
 - v. The amount (where applicable)
 - vi. Signatures of officials present at the opening of the mail
 - vii. Signatures of the receiving officials
 - viii. Reference of the receipt issued and the method of the disposal
 - ix. Signature of the authorized Finance official and the date of the cheque
- b. The Head of Administration must examine the prescribed register at least once a week to ensure that all instructions are being complied with and that the entire valuables recorded therein, have been promptly accounted for.
- c. He/she must sign the register in the last column to indicate that this has been done.
- d. In case of registered and certified mail, the date receipt and number of the advice slip of the relevant article must be recorded in a separate register.
- e. The advice slip issued by the post office should be signed in order for the article to be cleared. Once the articles have been collected the officials responsible for opening must be carefully examined for evidence of tampering. If they contain remittances or transferable items these must be recorded in the remittance register.
- f. Officials receiving remittances delivered by hand must verify the parcels and contents of the letter and entered into the incoming mail register
- g. Warrant vouchers, cheques, bank drafts, money orders, postal orders, transfer orders or other items of payment, excluding stamps and bank notes, received by an official on behalf of the state, whether made payable to him/her in his official capacity or not must immediately on receipt thereof be rendered not negotiable, by means of a crossing of the not negotiable across the face of item. This instruction does not apply to the case of warrant vouchers specially drawn for encashment.

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- h. All monies or other transferable items received through the post must be handed over immediately to the officials responsible for accounting and an acknowledgement should be made thereof in the relevant column of the remittance register.

7.4 Filing of post

7.4.1 All opened post in the registry should date stamped. The date stamp should be applied to the first page of a letter on open space. If the front page of the letter has insufficient space, the date stamp should then be applied at back of the letter. Under no circumstances must any written or printed part of the letter be stamped as this could make important information illegible. All cheques are to stamped at the back.

7.4.2 Allocation file numbers

- a. When a file number is allocated to a particular letter, it is written in the top left corner and the letter is placed in the correct file. Only the approved file plan should be used to determine file numbers.
- b. To determine the correct number, the list of main series should first be consulted and the most suitable series selected. The different sub-series should be consulted to identify the correct file reference.
- c. If more than one subject is dealt with in letter, the references should be identified for each subject and copies of the letter should be made for the relevant files. Officials working with correspondence must ensure that the correspondence they deal with is placed on the correct files.
- d. In cases where numerous attempts have been made to locate a file by registry officials, then a duplicate file should be opened and entered with a pencil in the register of files opened.
- e. When the original file is located then the contents of the temporary files must be amalgamated to it.



8. Management of records

8.1 *Collection of records within Molemole Local Municipality*

The Secretary in each of the departments within Molemole Municipality should serve as record coordinator for that section. The record coordinator will liaise with the Departmental Manager:

8.2 *Movement of files from Registry to other offices within Molemole Local Municipality*

a. The following rules shall apply:

- Officials who request files should fill in their details in the register for outgoing files and also fill in the destination of the file in the control sheet pasted in the cover;
- The files should be returned to the registry as soon as the official is finished with it or on close of business every day.
- In cases where the matter on the file cannot be attended to immediately, the file should be sent back to registry until it is needed again.
- Files may not be removed from the building unless in special cases where the contents of the file will be used as evidence in court. For this purpose, a File Out Card with the following information is placed in the usual space of the file until the said file is returned.
 - i. File number
 - ii. Purpose of request
 - iii. Date of dispatch

8.3 *Preparation and opening of file covers*

- a. File descriptions and number of files must be printed neatly and legibly.
- b. The description of the subject must correspond with the description of the subject in the file plan.
- c. The date of the first correspondence began is noted on the cover once the first item is placed on the file after opening.
- d. The volume of the file should be clearly indicated on the cover as soon as the volume is opened.



8.4 *Closure and termination of files*

8.4.1 Closure at 3cm thickness

- a. Files should not be more than 3cm thick. When the thickness of the files reached 3cm, it should be closed and a new volume opened. When a volume is closed, the date of the most recent correspondence is noted on the file cover [next to date of first letter].
- b. A sheet of paper is placed as the last item in the closed volume containing the words “closed, see volume 2”, which is also written on the file cover. The volumes are numbered consecutively. Letters and numerals must not be used.

8.4.2 Filing of closed volume and terminated records

- a. All closed volumes from the approved filing system or records control schedule are preserved in registry.
- b. Closed volumes of active correspondence files should be filed with current files on the shelves.
- c. Inactive files should be put aside in archive boxes.

8.5 *Storage of essential registers and schedules*

7.5.1 *The following items should be safeguarded by the registry officials:*

- **The master copy of the file plan** - this is copy of the file plan in which all approved subjects are correctly a neatly reflected.
- **Register of files opened** - contains a description of files opened in the registry office in accordance with the subject provisions on the file plan.
- **Register of outgoing files** - contains of staff members borrowing files from registry as well as detailed information of the file. It is used to control movement of files from the registry to other offices within the Municipality
- **Registration of approved tender documents and agreements** - contains approved tender documents and agreements of contractors and consultants.
- **Register for mails** - used to record all registered mails to be posted.
- **Delivery register** - contains mails that are received by the registry to be distributed to recipients at offices.

8.6 *Records control schedules*

7.6.1 *Records control schedules contains every type of item which is not part of the filing system.*

- **Schedule for paper** - based records other than correspondence systems- contains all paper based records which do not form part of the file plan, e.g Annual reports, registers etc.
- **Schedule for electronic record** - contains an inventory of all electronic records systems which do not form part of the file plan.
- **Schedule for micrographic records** - contains all micrographic records and projects e.g maps.
- **Schedule for audio-visual records** - contains audio-visual records like tape records, videos and compact disks.

7.6.2 *All schedules do not form part of the file plan due to the format and volume. They are stored in other offices within the **Molemole Local Municipality***

9. Maintenance of the file plan

9.1 All records shall be kept in storage areas that are appropriate for the type of medium. The National Archives and Records Services' guidelines shall be followed when implementing this policy.

9.2 The Archives Clerk or a properly designated official is responsible for the maintenance of the file plan.

9.3 Officials must ensure that correspondences are placed correctly and prevents the subsequent wear and tear of the file plan.

9.4 Faulty additions through which exiting files are duplicated, or which overlap with existing subjects, or addition of documents to incorrect places should be avoided at all costs.

9.5 Any amendments made to the file plan should be properly documented in the Master file plan after approval by the Head of Administration.

9.6 All these amendments should be reported to the Provincial Archivist and as soon as approval is received, the provisions in the Master copy and on the file covers are finalized.

9.7 The Archives Clerk should avoid and/or pay attention to the following:

- a. Overloading of files, very small or fine subdivisions that can be combined with other subdivisions of files can be the right option
- b. The need to re-divide files where necessary.
- c. Correct use of policy files to prevent non-policy items from accumulating on them
- d. The placing of ephemeral items on files and valuable items on files to be disposed after authority has been given.



10. Maintenance of the records control schedule

The Archives Clerk or any appropriately designated official is responsible for ensuring that all types of records other than correspondence files used in the office are immediately added to the list and reported to the Provincial Archivist along with the proposed disposal instructions in cases where the disposal authority has already been granted.

11. Protection of Records

11.1 Access


- All officials must note that they have access to files and records only to carry out their duties. No unauthorized persons may gain access to the registry, or record centre during or after office hours.

11.2 Fire prevention measures and protection from roof leaks

- a. The lighting of matches, smoking and storage of inflammable material or cleaning solutions in registry is strictly forbidden. Only fire extinguishers may be used to extinguish fire in the registry office. The registry officials must from time to time advise when the extinguisher is due for inspection so that it is updated. Water should not be use.
- b. The registry office and offices where records are kept should be regularly inspected to guard against roof leaks and water pipe leaks. The Registry Officials should advise the Head of Administration if there is anything to be fixed.
- c. The registry and other areas where records are stored must be regularly examined to avoid the occurrence of pests and plagues.
- d. No direct sunlight must be allowed to shine on any records and for this reason the blinds in the registry must be kept rolled down when the sun shines in.
- e. All officials must be aware that it is considered to be violation of Limpopo Archives Act (Act 05 of 2001) to deliberately damage records. This includes deliberate damage by careless and indifferent handling. Records must therefore be handled as carefully as possible. Careful handling also saves time and money because damaged file covers do not have to be changed as regularly.

12. Disposal of Records

- 12.1 No municipal records (including e-mail) shall be destroyed, erased or otherwise disposed of without prior written authorization from the National Archivist.
- 12.2 The Archives Clerk manages the disposal schedule of correspondence.
- 12.3 Retention periods must be adhered to if a records/correspondence is to be disposed. Retention periods are determined by taking into account Molemole Municipality's legal obligations and operational uniqueness.
- 12.4 Should a staff member disagree with the allocated retention period(s), he/she must contact the Archives Clerk to discuss a more appropriate retention period.

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- 12.5 All disposals should be authorized by the Head of Administration prior to their execution to ensure that archival records are not destroyed inadvertently.
 - 12.6 Approved disposals shall be conducted once every year at a time determined by Head of Department.
 - 12.7 Non-Archival records that are needed for litigations, Promotion of Access to Information requests or Promotion of Administrative Justice actions may not be destroyed until such time that the Manager: Legal Services or any properly authorized officials has indicated the destruction hold can be lifted.

13. Training of records personnel

- a. The Archives Clerk(s) and Registry Officer(s) must have excellent knowledge of the National Archives and Records Services Records Management Course as well as other records management training that would equip him/her to perform duties competently.
- b. The Head of Administration shall identify such training courses that are relevant to the duties of the registry staff and shall ensure that the registry staff is trained appropriately.
- c. The Head of Administration shall ensure that all staff members are aware of the records management policy, procedure manual and file plan. Where it is deemed appropriate a workshop shall be conducted to familiarize registry staff with provisions of the policy.

14. Reporting on mail statistics

- a. Monthly reports should be compiled for all incoming, outgoing and disposed correspondence
- b. This report should be submitted to the Head of Administration who will refine it to be combined with overall Administration Report to be submitted for Corporate Portfolio Committee meetings.

15. Policy Evaluation and Review

- a. This policy shall be reviewed once every year by Administration section to iron out any deficiencies identified during its implementation
- b. All registry staff is encouraged to report any difficulties they experience during implementation to the Head of Administration.
- c. An updated version of this policy shall be taken to the Corporate Services Portfolio Committee for approval.
- d. Once approved, the new version shall become the official registry and records policy of the municipality



16. **Approval of the policy**

a) Date of Approval by Council _____

b) Signed on Behalf of the Council

Hon. Mayor