



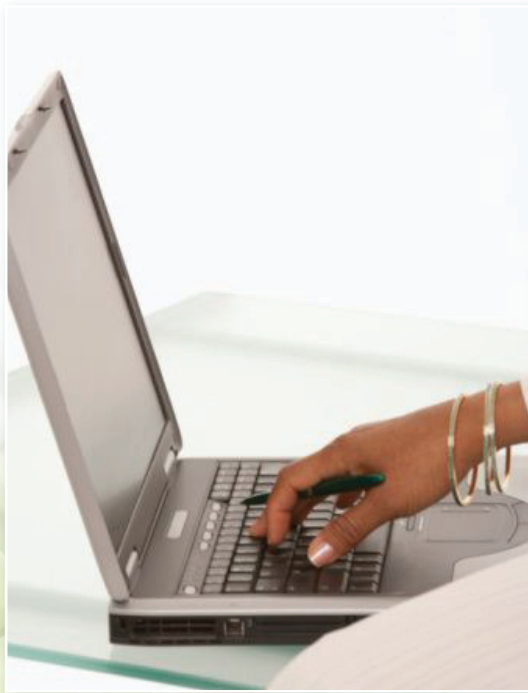
# **GUIDELINES ON STYLES OF ADDRESS FOR PUBLIC SECTOR OFFICERS**

Letters • Minutes • Memorandum • Cabinet Papers • Addresses

**Office of Public Sector Reform  
Ministry of Civil Service**



# *Guidelines on Styles of Address for Public Sector Officers*





## INTRODUCTION

These Guidelines are an update of an earlier version produced by the Office of Public Sector Reform in April 1998. This revised version serves the same purpose of improving and maintaining the standards of addressing letters in the Public Service and ensuring effective communication of information to its users.

It is important to thoroughly edit and correctly address all forms of communication paying particular attention to spelling (especially, correct spelling of the names of persons), grammar and formatting.

Every public officer has a responsibility to be professional and efficient in carrying out his/her duties - this is important for meaningful public sector reform.

M.A.D. ARCHER  
*Director (Ag.)*  
*Office of Public Sector Reform*  
*November, 2006*



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# CHAPTER I

## BASIC RULES IN OFFICIAL WRITING

These notes apply mainly to letter writing but briefly take into account other forms of official writing such as memoranda, minutes, Cabinet Papers, ministerial briefs or other position papers each of which has its own distinct format. The following basic rules applicable to letter writing, generally apply to other official correspondence as well –

- the main test of good writing is that it can easily be understood in the sense intended by the writer and by those who have read it;

- clarity, brevity and simplicity of language are far better than the stilted, woolly turn of phrase;



- where correspondence is addressed to a person, it is important to find out relevant information about that person – correct spelling of his/her name, his/her correct address, the titles which he/she possesses, etc.

- paragraphs should not be too long nor too short but always complete, confining, as far as possible, an idea or a particular aspect of an idea or of information to each paragraph;

- the paragraphs of a letter are not numbered. Where it is necessary to refer to a previous paragraph, do so by indicating first, second, third, etc. The paragraphs of memoranda, minutes, Cabinet Papers and other forms of official correspondence are, however, numbered numerically for easy reference.



**LETTER**

SECRETARY  
MINISTRY  
Tel. No. (246)  
Fax No. (246)

Ref. No.: \_\_\_\_\_ January 08, 2008



Mr. The Chief Minister  
Champani  
BILASPUR, U.P.

Dear Sir

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Yours faithfully,  
Permanent Secretary.

**LETTER**

SECRETARY  
MINISTRY  
Tel. No. (246)  
Fax No. (246)

Ref. No.: \_\_\_\_\_ January 08, 2008

Mr. The Chief Minister  
Champani  
BILASPUR, U.P.



Dear Sir

\_\_\_\_\_

Yours faithfully,  
Permanent Secretary.

*The paragraphs of letters are never numbered.  
Reference by: 1st, 2nd or 3rd paragraph.*

**MEMORANDUM**

MEMORANDUM  
FOR THE  
THE Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of \_\_\_\_\_



DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ Ref. No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Yours faithfully,  
Permanent Secretary.

**MINUTES**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Yours faithfully,  
Permanent Secretary.

**CABINET PAPER**

THE CABINET  
No. 000 / 00

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
6. \_\_\_\_\_  
7. \_\_\_\_\_  
8. \_\_\_\_\_

Yours faithfully,  
Permanent Secretary.

*The paragraphs of memoranda, minutes, Cabinet Papers  
and other forms of official correspondence  
are always numbered numerically.  
Reference by: the paragraph number.*



**Definitions: Brief Outline of three forms of official writing**

**1. Letter**

The letter is the means of correspondence between a Government agency and members of the public. Letters are also written to other Governments, national and international organisations and in rare circumstances (e.g. a disciplinary matter), from public officer to public officer in the same agency or between public officers in different agencies.

**2. Minute**

Correspondence **on file** between personnel in the same or different Government agencies is called minutes. Except in very rare circumstances of the loose leaf minute, all minutes must be submitted on file. Even the loose leaf minute should be put on file as soon as possible. All references in a minute should be flagged for quick accessibility.

**3. Memorandum**

A memorandum is correspondence between one Government agency and another. All Memoranda should be issued from or to the office not to the name of the Head of Department, Permanent Secretary or the Head of a Statutory Board. Officers, other than the Head may, however, sign outgoing memoranda always over the title and on behalf of the relevant Head. The signature of the issuing officer should be placed above his name. The name should be in clear type in order to facilitate further contact.

**NOTE:** Complimentary Slips may be attached to documents which are being sent from the office.



## CHAPTER II

### COMMON FORMS OF ADDRESS – COURTESY TITLES

Every human being is entitled at least to the form of address – courtesy title – which clearly distinguishes gender and in the case of a female, her marital status as well.

In addressing letters the same form of address – courtesy or other title and the forwarding address – should be used inside and outside. The principal rules are that a man should be addressed as “Mr.” followed by his first name or initials where the first name is not known, followed by his family or last name, e.g. “Mr. John Smith” or “Mr. J. D. Smith”. Be sure to keep the forwarding address correct and complete in all cases so that “Mr. John Smith” would be addressed as follows if he lives in St. Andrew –

“Mr. John Smith  
Belleplaine  
St. Andrew”

The very formal “Esquire” (Esq. for short), used after the name of a man, is no longer in vogue as is the use of “Master” for a young boy. Where “Esq.” is used, “Mr.” is dropped at the beginning, hence “John Smith, Esq.” or “Mr. John Smith”.

For a married woman and a widow the form of address is always “Mrs.” followed by her first name and then her last or family name. Sometimes married women carry the names of their husbands preceded by “Mrs.”, e.g. “Mrs. John Smith” if Mrs. Smith is married to Mr. John Smith.



For an unmarried woman and young girl or a divorced woman who has reverted to her maiden family name, it is correct to address her as “Miss”. The newer “Ms.” has crept into usage as a means of not making a distinction on marital status but not every woman likes this form of address and it is recommended that “Miss” or “Mrs.” be retained.



## CHAPTER III

### COMMON FEATURES OF LETTERS

In addition to the official address of the writer at the top right hand corner of the letter, the address of the person intended to receive the letter should be given in full at the top left hand corner. In opening the letter, a salutation is necessary – salutation being “Sir”, “Madam”, “Dear Sir”, “Dear Madam”, etc. At the end of the letter, the subscription “Yours truly”, “Yours sincerely”, “Yours faithfully”, should be put immediately above the signature of the person sending the letter. These features will vary in accordance with the professional, academic or honorific titles of the addressee.

To summarise, the following should always be borne in mind in addressing official letters –

- (1) There should be an appropriate courtesy title – Mr., Mrs., Miss – as part of the address of the person to whom the letter is being sent, inserted before the first name or initial of such a person.
- (2) There should always be an appropriate salutation – “Sir”, “Madam”, “Dear Sir”, “Dear Madam”, etc. – and this may depend on the degree of familiarity between the sender and the recipient, but familiarity may not be presumed by the Secretary, Stenographer, Typist.
- (3) At the end of the letter before the signature, there should be a final salutation/subscription – “Yours truly”, “Yours sincerely”, “Yours faithfully”, etc. – (*see Chapter V for choices*).



## CHAPTER IV

### PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC TITLES

Professional titles like “Dr.” or “Professor” are always used in place of the traditional courtesy titles – Mr., Mrs., etc. but never say “Professor Mr.” but “Professor” and the first name and then the family name – “Dr. John Smith” or “Dr. Barbara Smith”, like “Rev. Clifford Jackson” or “Professor Rudyard Gibson” are the correct forms of address unless the person is also the holder of an honorific title like “Sir” or “Dame”.

Medical doctors who are Fellows of a College of Surgeons are never addressed by professional title, but rather as “Mr.” or “Miss”, even if the female is married. So that “Mr. Jack Gibson, F.R.C.S.” is correct and **not** “Dr. Jack Gibson”.

Where a person is the holder of academic and professional qualifications as well as honorific titles, these should appear in the following order – honorific titles or orders, decorations, academic or professional qualifications, e.g. “Sir Jack Gibson, K.A., D.S.O., Ph.D, F.R.C.S.”

In detailing academic qualifications the lowest degree or qualification is always to be first, e.g. B.Sc., M.Sc., Ph.D. Of course qualifications are hardly ever detailed in addressing letters except it is necessary for official identification.

The opposite is true of honorific titles or orders and the highest placed first, e.g. Sir Harold B. St. John, K.A., Q.C., M.P.”



## CHAPTER V

### CEREMONIAL STYLES OF ADDRESS

Where a man is knighted he is referred to as “Sir”. His spouse is addressed as “Lady” and a formal letter to both of them would be, for example, “Sir Harold & Lady St. John”. When separately addressing the wife of a Knight the title “Lady” is placed between her first name and her family name, hence “Stella Lady St. John” **and not** “Lady Stella St. John”. Where a woman is knighted, she is always addressed as “Dame” followed by her first name, then the family name. Her husband is addressed as “Mr.” so that a formal letter to them would be “Dame Barbara Smith and Mr. John Smith”.

Set out below are ceremonial forms of address:–

Dignitary	Salutation	Final Salutation	In Conversation
<p><b>The Royal Family</b></p> <p>Her Majesty The Queen Buckingham Palace London SW1A 1AA United Kingdom</p> <p><b>Note:</b> The Queen's full title is “Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II”</p> <p>Normally one refers to “Her Majesty The Queen” or “The Queen”</p>	Your Majesty	I remain Your Majesty's faithful and devoted servant	“Your Majesty” first then “Ma'am”



Dignitary	Salutation	Final Salutation	In Conversation
<p><b>The Royal Family (cont'd)</b>            His Royal Highness            The Prince Philip            Duke of Edinburgh            Buckingham Palace            London SW1A 1AA</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Normally one refers to -            "His Royal Highness The Duke            of Edinburgh"            or "The Duke of Edinburgh"</p> <p>Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth            The Queen Mother            Clarence House            London SW1A 1AA            United Kingdom</p>	<p>Your Royal            Highness</p> <p>Your Majesty</p>	<p>Yours very            truly</p> <p>I remain Your            Majesty's            faithful and            devoted            servant</p>	<p>"Yours Royal            Highness" first            then "Sir"</p> <p>"Yours Majesty"            first then            "Ma'am"</p>
<p><b><u>Governor-General</u></b>            His/Her Excellency Sir/Dame            (full name) followed by insignia            Governor-General of Barbados            Government House            Government Hill            St. Michael</p> <p>The present Governor-General            is: His Excellency Sir Clifford S.            Husbands, G.C.M.G., K.A.            Spouse is Lady Husbands</p> <p>Together they are referred to as            "Their Excellencies"</p> <p><b><u>N.B.:</u></b> * The Governor-General            may have other post-nominal            letters, such as P.C., Q.C.</p> <p>Correspondence should be            addressed to the Private            Secretary to the Governor-            General</p>	<p>Excellency</p>	<p>Yours truly</p>	<p>"Yours Excellency"            or            "Excellency" first            then            "Sir or "Madam"            or socially</p> <p>Sir (Christian            name) Dame            (christian name)</p>





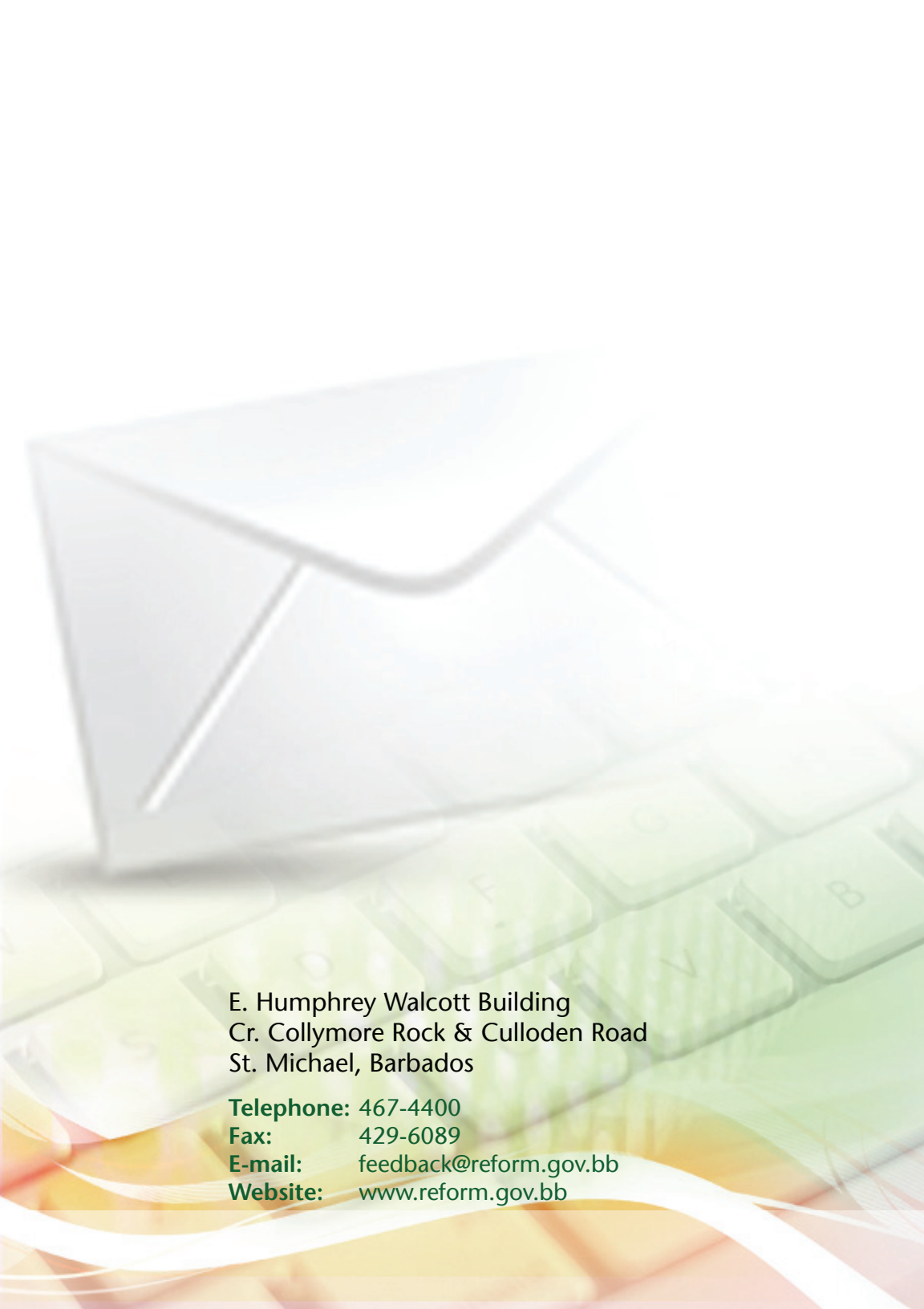
Dignitary	Salutation	Final Salutation	In Conversation
<p><b><u>President of the Senate</u></b></p> <p>His Honour Senator (full name)            President of the Senate            The Senate            Parliament Buildings            Trafalgar            Bridgetown</p>	<p>Dear Mr.            President            Dear Madam            President</p>	<p>Yours            sincerely</p>	<p>"Mr. President"            or "Madam            President" or            Senator</p>
<p><b><u>Speaker of the House</u></b></p> <p>His Honour Mr. (full name) M.P.            Speaker of the House            Parliament Buildings            Trafalgar            Bridgetown</p>	<p>Dear Mr.            Speaker            Dear Madam            Speaker</p>	<p>Yours            sincerely</p>	<p>"Mr. Speaker" or            "Madam Speaker"</p>
<p><b><u>Judge of the High Court</u></b></p> <p>The Honourable Mr./Madam            Justice (surname) insignia</p> <p><b>* Christian name is not used            unless there is more than one            person with the same            surname.</b></p> <p><b>* If knighted the "Sir"/"Dame"            used socially and The            Honourable is dropped e.g.:            Sir (christian name) and            Lady (surname)            Dame (Christian name) and            Mr. (surname)</b></p>	<p>Dear Sir/            Madam            My Lord/My            Lady (judicial)            Dear Judge            (social)            (excluding the            surname)</p>	<p>Yours or            faithfully            Yours            sincerely</p>	<p>Mr./Madam            Justice or Sir/            Madam (name)</p>



Dignitary	Salutation	Final Salutation	In Conversation
<p><b><u>Ambassadors/High Commissioners of foreign countries</u></b></p> <p>His/Her Excellency Mr./Mrs./Miss/Dr. (full name Ambassador of (country) High Commissioner for (country))*</p> <p>*One exception: British High Commissioner and not High Commissioner for Britain Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</p> <p>Spouse: Mrs./Mr. (surname)</p>	<p>Dear Sir Madam</p> <p>or</p> <p>Dear Ambassador/ High Commissioner</p>	<p>Yours sincerely</p>	<p>"Yours Excellency"</p> <p>or</p> <p>"Excellency" or informally. Ambassador (surname) for male or female</p>
<p><b><u>Knights/Dame</u></b></p> <p>*on introduction: <b>Sir/Dame (full name). The spouse of a knight is given courtesy title of Lady followed by surname. The Christian name is used in correspondence if it is necessary to distinguish between more than one person with the same surname in which case the christian name comes first.</b></p> <p><b>National Heroes</b> Right Excellent followed by title and name for e.g. Rt. Excellent (Sir (name)</p> <p><b>bearer carries title after death and would be referred to as the late Rt. Excellent (name)</b></p>	<p>Sir/Dame or (socially) Dear Sir/ Dame (christian name)</p>	<p>Yours faithfully or Yours sincerely</p>	<p>Sir/Dame (christian name)</p>
<p><b>National Heroes</b> Right Excellent followed by title and name for e.g. Rt. Excellent (Sir (name)</p> <p><b>bearer carries title after death and would be referred to as the late Rt. Excellent (name)</b></p>	<p>Dear Sir/ Madam</p>	<p>Yours faithfully or Yours sincerely</p>	<p>Sir/Mr./Miss (christian or last name)</p>



DIGNITARY	SALUTATION	SUBSCRIPTION
<p><b><u>Ecclesiastical</u></b> (cont'd) <b><u>Archbishop</u></b> (West Indies) The Most Rev. Dr. (full name) Archbishop of the West Indies Primate and Metropolitan</p>	Your Grace	Respectfully yours
<p><b>Bishop</b> (Anglican) Rt. Rev. (full name) Archbishop of Barbados</p> <p><b>Note:</b> The present Bishop of Barbados is addressed "Rt. Rev. &amp; Hon. Dr. Rufus Broome".</p>	My Lord	Yours faithfully
<p><b><u>Archdeacon</u></b> The Venerable (full name) Archdeacon of Barbados</p>	Dear Archdeacon	Yours faithfully
<p><b><u>Dean</u></b> The Very Rev. (full name) Dean of St. Michael's Cathedral</p>	Dear Dean	Yours faithfully
<p><b><u>Priest</u></b> Rev. (full name)</p>	Reverend Sir or Dear Father	Yours faithfully
<p><b><u>Bishop</u></b> (Roman Catholic) Rt. Rev. (full name) Bishop of Bridgetown</p>	Dear Bishop	Yours faithfully



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