

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
(QUESTION BRANCH)

MOST IMMEDIATE

Parliament House Annexe,
New Delhi – 110 001

No.19/9/X/XV/2012-Q

Dated : 27 February, 2012

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject : Guidelines and Procedure for dealing with Parliament Questions.

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The undersigned is directed to state that the Tenth Session of Fifteenth Lok Sabha is scheduled to commence from **Monday, 12 March, 2012** and is likely to conclude on **Tuesday, 22 May, 2012**. The Ministries/Departments concerned of the Government of India are requested to follow the guidelines and procedures as stipulated in **Annexure-I** meticulously.

2. The Officers dealing with Questions in Lok Sabha Secretariat (as per details given at Annexure-II) be contacted, if need be, to avoid undue delay and inconvenience.

3. The copies of the provisionally admitted questions made available to the Ministries/Departments, in advance for their comments, if any, and also to facilitate collection of material for preparation of answer, are sent online. The Ministries/Departments are, therefore, requested to furnish e-mail id of the Parliament Section or any other designated Officers/Branch(es) to whom advance copy of admitted notice(s) of questions can be forwarded, to the concerned Executive Officer.

4. It is also requested that contents of this O.M. may be hosted on the Website of Ministry/Department for wider dissemination of information.

(R.S. KAMBO)
Director

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Encl: As above

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To,

1. Prime Minister Office.
2. Cabinet Secretariat –with the request to ensure compliance by all the Ministries/ Departments of Government of India, and
3. All Ministries/Departments of Government of India

*in copy
for circulation
SP/12*

Copy forwarded for information to:-

1. Principal Secretary to HS
2. Sr. PS to Secretary General
3. PA to AS(PS)
4. PA to Director (Q&J)
5. Additional Director (Q &EA)
6. Additional Director (Q&C)
7. Additional Director (Q&LSTV)
8. Additional Director (Q & CF)
9. Additional Director (Q&BP)
10. All Groups of Question Branch

(T.H. Rao)
Deputy Secretary

1. Factual Position through Fax/E-mail

Factual position in regard to referred questions should be furnished by the Ministries/Departments expeditiously through E-mail/Fax (Fax Nos. 23035344 and 23010756). All correspondence sent for furnishing facts should be acknowledged by the Ministries concerned. Where the facts are not received by the stipulated date, the Lok Sabha Secretariat would take appropriate decision in the matter, on merit.

2. Question on which a plea of not in public interest advanced

A question is not usually disallowed on the sole plea of the Ministry/Department that it is not in the public interest to give information on the floor of the House. It is always open to a Minister to state in reply to a question that he is not prepared to disclose the information in public interest and it is for the House to accept it. The Speaker may, only in rare cases, disallow a question in larger national interest, if it is brought to his/her notice in time by the Minister concerned that the disclosure of information will be prejudicial to the safety of the State, giving also briefly the background of the matter.

3. Advance copy of the admitted questions

Advance copies of the provisionally admitted questions are sent online to the Ministry/Department to facilitate collection of material for preparation of answer. It is also intended to seek comments of the Ministry/Department concerned suo-moto. Immediately on receipt of the advance copy, the Ministry/Department is expected to go through the contents of the notice. In the event where the Ministry/Department feels that the notice suffers from any infirmity viz the Government of India is not being responsible; matter being pending in a court of law; etc. or that the question lacks factual basis, the same may be brought to the notice of the Additional Secretary/Director-in-charge as expeditiously as possible and in any case within 24 hours of the receipt of such advance notice. Where a communication is received beyond this period and/or after Questions List has been printed, it will not be possible to reconsider the admissibility of a question in the light of facts communicated.

4. Transfer of question

Where the subject matter of a question is the concern of a Ministry other than the one to which it is originally addressed, the Ministry to whom the question has been originally addressed by the Member, should not only move transfer of the question to the Ministry concerned but also obtain acceptance/consent from transferee Ministry/Department. Under no circumstance, the transfer will be effected unless and until intimation about the acceptance of the transfer of the question is received in the Secretariat from the accepting Ministry well in time i.e 10 days prior to the date of answer. Any request received thereafter shall not be entertained.

5. Ministry/Department responsible for answering of questions

The Secretariat receives a number of representations from various Ministries/Depts. indicating that the subject matter of the notices of question have been marked erroneously and sometime return such notices to the Question Branch. In this context, it may be stated that it is the exclusive right of the Hon'ble Member to designate the Minister for answering of question. To guide Members, a booklet "Demarcation of Responsibilities in Government of India", containing the subjects for which various Ministries/Departments are responsible for answering questions has been circulated to them. This booklet is based on notifications issued by the Cabinet Secretariat from time to time. Only in case of patent errors, Lok Sabha Secretariat intervenes and corrects the nomenclature of the Ministry in consultation with the concerned Ministry/Department.

Under no circumstance, the notice of question should be returned to the Secretariat. The Ministry/Department should follow the prescribed procedure as outlined above, in Para 4, for the purpose.

6. Circulation of Lists of Admitted Questions

The printed Lists of admitted questions for a particular day are circulated five days before the date of answer of the questions by the respective Ministries/Departments. The aforesaid Lists are also made available on the website of Lok Sabha i.e. <http://loksabha.nic.in> six days prior to the date of answer. Corrigenda, if any, pertaining to the listed questions are issued by the Secretariat from time to time and made available on the webpage of Lok Sabha for immediate attention of the concerned Ministry/Department. Ministry/Department may depute officials of not below the level of Assistant to collect copies of Lists of Questions and corrigenda

from the Distributor Branch of the Secretariat) and in case of any difficulty, they may contact the EO-in-Charge of the respective Group of Question Branch.

7. Part-wise replies to questions

At times, it has been observed that Ministries / Departments do not furnish reply to each part of the question and instead club all the parts together and furnish a consolidated reply. In this process, specific reply to each part is sometimes lost. It is thus again emphasized that answers to the questions should be part-wise, neat and clean, legible and whenever there is any reference to any statement, etc. in the text of a reply, the same should be enclosed for ready reference.

8. Reference of website in the replies by the Ministries/ Departments

It has also been noticed that some of the Ministries are quoting/referring their website in reply/replies to a question(s). In such an eventuality, Members of Parliament, find it difficult to frame supplementaries during Question Hour in the absence of instant access to such information. The Ministries/Departments are, therefore, advised to provide the requisite information in the replies itself. The information available on the website, may be enclosed, for ready reference.

9. Assurances in reply to a Starred Question

As per convention developed over the years, assurances are generally not given in replies to a Starred Question. The Ministries/Departments are, therefore, advised to refrain from furnishing assurances in reply to a Starred Question.

10. Supply of Hard Copies of Replies to Questions

The hard copies of replies to questions should be sent only on A-4 size paper with a margin of an inch and a half on the left hand side of the paper. To the extent possible, replies to questions should be furnished back-to-back with special emphasis on print. The English version of the reply should be printed on one side with the corresponding Hindi version on the other side. The print of answer should be in font size 12 (in Arial Black) printed in double space for convenient reading.

In compliance with the direction of Hon'ble Speaker, the requisite number of copies of answers along with annexures should be sent by 1500 hours positively

on the working day preceding the date on which the questions are due for answer
as per details given below:-

	Type of Questions	No. of Copies of answers to be supplied by the Ministries/Departments	
	STARRED AND SHORT NOTICE QUESTIONS		
(a)	Original Notices in English	English Hindi	350 80
(b)	Original Notices in Hindi	English Hindi	350 350
	UNSTARRED QUESTIONS		
(c)	Original Notices in English	English Hindi	200 80
(d)	Original Notices in Hindi	English Hindi	200 200
(e)	125 extra copies of Statements (referred in starred reply) to be laid on the Table of the House for supply to Members concerned.		

It may kindly be noted that no last minute request for change in the text/reply would be entertained, after due time. Accordingly, the Ministries/Departments are advised to furnish replies complete in all respects and without any mistake.

11. Soft Copies of Replies for uploading on Website.

As the replies to the questions are to be hosted on the website of Parliament immediately after Question Hour, it is requested that the text of Questions/Answers as an ASCII text file and the Annexures containing tabular data and diagrams be sent in HTML Format to Software Unit, Computer (HW & SW) Management Branch, Lok Sabha Secretariat, Parliament Library Building, New Delhi-110001 under intimation to Additional Secretary / Director-in- Charge of Question Branch. Likewise, soft copies of the text of Questions/Answers in Hindi version in Unicode Format (Mangal Font) may be sent to Hindi Information Unit, Editorial Branch, Lok Sabha Secretariat, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi-110001.

It may kindly be ensured that soft copies of replies are made available, immediately after Question Hour in the form and manner, out lined above.

12. Correcting Statement by the Minister

When a Minister desires to correct any inaccuracy in the information furnished in respect of Starred/Unstarred/Short Notice Question, he/she is required to make a statement correcting the reply in the House. In this connection, the attention of Ministry/Department is invited to Direction 16, Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha

13. Supply of updated list of telephone numbers etc.

Ministries/Departments are also requested to supply five (5) copies of the updated list of telephone numbers (Residence/ Office), Mobile Nos, addresses and E-mails of the Minister, Secretary and other officers dealing with Parliamentary work in the Ministry/Department to the undersigned before commencement of every Session. The updated list of nodal officers for Parliamentary work with aforesaid details may also be made available on the webpage of the respective Ministries/Departments for immediate reference.
