

OFFICE PRACTICE (DES 1103)

LECTURE : 4

TOPIC : Mail Handling Systems

AIM : To understand the mail handling systems and different kind of services provided by the Post Office.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After completing this chapter you should be able to understand:

- 1.The procedures in handling incoming and outgoing mail
- 2.The use of the franking machine and the types of postal services available at the post office.

TOPIC OUTLINE:

- 4.1 Mail Room functions
- 4.2 Procedure in Handling Incoming Mail
- 4.3 Procedure in Handling Outgoing Mail
- 4.4 Mailroom equipment
- 4.5 Franking Machine
- 4.6 Postal services

NOTES:

Handling the post

In most large organizations there is a department responsible for handling all incoming and outgoing mail, and some or all of the internal mail; in government offices, public corporations and international organizations; the department responsible for this branch of work is usually called the Post Room or Mail Room or department.

The handling of mail should be carried out systematically and efficiently to ensure quick distribution.

4.1 Mail Room Functions

The functions carried out by the mailroom staff include the following:

- Collecting mail from the Post Office at least twice a day, usually early morning and early afternoon if a private postbag or box is rented at the Post Office.
- Processing mail received.
- Supervising messengers (internal postmen) who collect and deliver mail internally and externally (delivery messengers).
- Sorting and distributing internal mail.
- Processing outgoing mail
- Delivering postal mail to the Post Office at the end of the day.

4.2 Procedure in Handling Incoming Mail

1. Separate all personal, private and confidential mail. Whatever the standard procedure regarding the opening of mail, such correspondence should always reach the addressee's desk unopened.
2. Open all other mail – usually with the aid of a letter-opening machine.
3. Remove all contents
4. Check enclosures (a note should be made on relevant letter or any missing enclosures)
5. Attach enclosures to letters (normally with a semi-permanent staple)
6. Enter any remittances (cheques, postal orders etc) in a Remittance Book, which should be checked by someone in authority.
7. Date stamp all correspondence.
8. Sort mail into appropriate departments/sections for distribution.
9. Retain envelopes for a few days in case of queries.
10. In many organizations procedures in recording the mail may vary but most organizations incoming mail should be recorded in a Mail Log or Mail Inward Register.

Reading the mail – Sometimes a piece of mail has to be brought to the attention of several people. In such a case the following steps can be applied.

- a. A list of the various departments concerned could be attached to the letter and sent round the office. After each department has dealt with it, a tick is placed off the name of the department.
- b. The department dealing with the main point can have the original and the responsibility of passing on the queries to the other departments.
- c. Several copies of the entire letter can be reproduced on an office copier or word processor and one copy sent to each department.

The best suggestion is “C” because it saves time and each department will have a copy of the original document.

Below is an example of a circulation slip or routing slip (refer to a above).

CIRCULATION SLIP	
PLEASE INITIAL AND CIRCULATE	
QUICKLY IN THE ORDER SHOWN	
NAME	INITIALS
MR H JOHN	
MR D SMITH	
MR C TIKKET	
MR J GORDON	
MR J COLE	
MRS R KING	
FOR FILING	

4.3 Procedures in Handling Outgoing Mail

The procedure largely depends on the volume of post handled and the equipment available.

1. Letters are delivered to the executive for signature.
2. If enclosures are available, they are checked and attached to the appropriate letters.
3. Addresses and Mailing Notations are checked on the letter and the envelope. Windows envelopes may be used to save typing the name and address twice.
4. The letters are folded and inserted into their envelopes and the flaps are tucked in or sealed.
5. Packages are weighed and stamped or franked by machine.
6. Envelopes are weighed and stamped or franked by machine.
7. Special items of mail such as registered, recorded delivery etc, which require labels or forms have to be handed over the counter of the post office, will be kept away from the remainder of the post.
8. The envelopes are tied in bundles with all the addresses facing in one direction.

After the letters have been stamped, particulars of the letters posted may be entered into a postage book, which serves as:

- a. A check on the number of stamps used, and
- b. A record of all letters posted.

4.4 Mail Room Equipment

- **Addressing Machine**
This is useful for firms who send out a lot of mail regularly to the same people. Plates with names and addresses are prepared.
- **Electronic Scales**
These are the latest weighing machines used for letters and parcels. Press the right keys and find out the weight and postage to anywhere in the world.
- **Folding/Inserting Machine**
This machine will fold letters and other documents, and even put the documents into their envelopes.
- **Shredder**
This is used to destroy documents no longer needed, particularly confidential documents. Many companies recycle their waste paper.
- **Collating Machine**
This machine is useful when dealing with large volumes of paper. It sorts the documents according to the page order.
- **Electrical Letter Opener**
A sharp blade on this piece of equipment cuts off a tiny piece from the edge of envelopes.
- **Franking Machine**
This machine prints the value of postage on an envelope or label, together with the date/time, license number and an advertising slogan.

4.5 Franking Machine

If a franking machine is used, adhesive stamps are dispensed with and printed impressions are made instead on the envelopes. Franking machines are purchased or hired from certain office equipment manufacturers, and a license must be obtained from the local post office.

A certain amount of credit is secured at the post office and every time the machine prints an impression the amount of postage used is recorded on the machine's meter. The amount of credit in hand can be calculated by deducting the amount used, as shown in the meter, from the amount purchased.

All types of mail can be franked, including ordinary inland letter post, postcards, registered letters, telegrams, parcels, and foreign mail.

Advantages

- A saving in time compared with choosing, tearing off, moistening and affixing stamps.
- Greater security by eliminating the use of stamps, which may be lost or stolen. Franking impressions do not exist until the machine is operated and then they are non-negotiable.
- Ease of planning future requirements, as there is no need, which there is with stamps, to forecast the varying quantities of different denominations required.
- Better control of expenditure as the meter shows at a glance the amount used and the amount of credit.
- A saving in printing costs as an advertisement or return address can be printed simultaneously with the franking impressions.
- Assists in speeding up the dispatch of mail from the post office, as the envelopes are not held up for franking by post office officials.
- A postage book may be dispensed with when a franking machine is used since the machine meter indicates the amount of postage paid.
- Eliminates the drudgery of moistening and sticking stamps on envelopes.

Disadvantages

- The savings referred to in the advantages must be set against the cost of the machine and the fact that operators may waste postage by franking wrong amounts or not producing legible impressions.
- A franking machine is unlikely to be an economic proposition for small firms with fewer than 20-30 letters daily.
- Because of security a franking machine cannot be made available to a large number of people, which necessitates the use of loose postage stamps for mail, which has to be dispatched after the franking machine has been locked away.
- Although a franking machine indicates the amount of postage used, it does not provide a record of letters posted.
- Franked envelopes cannot be posted as easily as those, which are stamped as they must be taken to the post office or posted in specially prepared envelope.

4.6 Postal Mail Services (Britain)

Letter and Cards (Inland)

Two classes of service, known respectively as first class and second class. Second class letters will normally be delivered up to two working days later than first-class letters except that over long or difficult journeys, or when posted in large consignments they may take a little longer. The class of letter is determined by the amount of postage paid. A second-class letter is a letter where postage is paid less than the first-class postage. No written indication of service is necessary except where it is separately specified for certain categories of mail. All letters may be sealed, including those previously sent by the printed-paper rate. There is a limit of 750 gms, weight for second-class letters, but there is no weight limit for first-class letters.

Overseas

Letters and cards may be sent abroad by airmail or surface mail. Airmail letters to destinations outside Europe should have a blue airmail label affixed to the top left-hand corner of the address side or alternatively the words “By AIRMAIL” may be written boldly in the same place.

Air letters may be sent to any address in the world for a cheaper rate of postage provided they are written on either stamped air letter form which is obtainable from post offices or on privately manufactured forms for which the postage may be prepaid either by means of a postage stamp or a franked impression. They must not contain enclosures.

Circulars

Second-class letters posted in bulk

A rebate of postage is allowed on second-class letters posted in bulk when the number exceeds 4250. The rebate must be applied for in advance of posting on a special form obtainable at any post office. The packets must be identical in shape and size. The letters must be available for posting at the same time or in batches as the local head postmasters require. Rebate items are liable to be held back in favour of the fully paid mail and are generally dealt with in off-peak periods. They should be arranged in bundles of fifty in geographical divisions with their addresses all arranged in the same direction.

Prepayment of Postage

Prepayment of postage in money on large quantities of circulars or other items may be arranged at head post offices. The conditions under which packets may be prepaid are that:

1. The number of postal packets, other than parcels, is not less than 120; and the number of parcels is not less than 20.
2. The packets, with the addresses arranged in the same direction, are securely tied in bundles of 50 (or for bulky packets, in bundles of 10), the articles in each bundle being chargeable with the same rate of postage, which must be shown on the outside of the bundle. The appropriate class of posting (first or second) must also be shown.
3. Parcels are handed in separately from other postal packets.

Overseas Printed Papers

Printed papers may be sent abroad by airmail or surface mail at reduced rates of postage. These may include catalogues, greeting cards, printed notices, and photographs, books and circulars printed in imitation of typewriting reproduced from duplicators and copiers. Copies obtained by means of a typewriter including top or carbon copies are, however, not admissible.

The packets, which should be clearly marked ‘Printed Papers’ in the upper left-hand corner of the address side, should be unsealed so that they can be easily examined. Certain items such as books, maps, newspaper and pamphlets may be eligible for dispatch at reduced rates of postage.

Overseas Bulk Posting

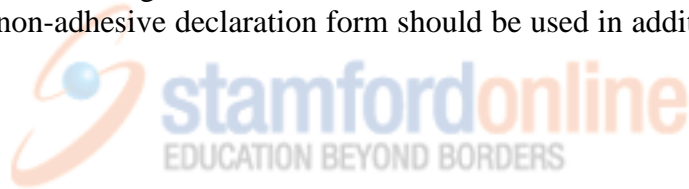
Firms that have large numbers of printed paper items for dispatch abroad to a single addressee in another country may make arrangements for their postings to be accepted in bulk under the Direct Agents Bag Service. This service is available for both full-rate and reduced-rate printed-papers. Items sent by this service may not be registered or insured. To qualify for acceptance under these arrangements, postings must be made at regular intervals and must be presented to the post office in mailbags made ready for dispatch abroad in conformity with international requirements.

Overseas Small Packets

This service provides for the transmission of goods, whether dutiable or not, in the same mails as printed papers which, as a rule, travel more quickly than parcels. The sender must write his name and address on the outside of the packet and must write the words 'small packet' in the top left-hand corner on the address side of the packet. The packets must be wrapped in such a way that they may be easily examined without any being broken.

Customs Declaration

All packets posted for abroad at the letter rate of postage and containing goods, whether or not dutiable in the country of destination, must be declared to customs. If the value of goods does not exceed £50, a green label form of declaration is sufficient, but for goods in excess of £50, a non-adhesive declaration form should be used in addition to the green label.



Office Service

The post office provides the following for caller's service through which mail may be received earlier or at a more convenient time than normal delivery by the postman. They are:

The Private Box

A Private Box may be rented for the reception of postal packets to be called for except on Sundays by the renter or his representative. A box number is allocated for use in the address. The addressee holds a key to open the box and the Post Office authorities hold the other key. Mail is usually handed to the addressee to place in the box. A yearly rent should be paid for the private box.

Advantage

It is possible to obtain correspondence in advance of the normal time of delivery.

The Private Bag

In this case the Post Office will sort mail into lockable Private Bags ready for collection. The addressee must provide the bag, which is normally taken to the Post Office. Arrangements can be made for the Private Bag to be delivered to the addressee provided it does not weigh more than 1.1 kg when full. If not the addressee must collect the bag from the Post Office. An annual charge is chargeable.

Registered Post and Recorded Delivery

	REGISTERED POST	RECORDED DELIVERY
Label	A very small one	Larger than registered post
Uses	For sending articles of value where security handling is needed and to have entitlement (compensation) if lost.	For proof of posting and proof of delivery, but not concerned in compensation if lost.
Posting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Market 'Registered' on the left hand corner Handed in at the Post Office counter Must pay cost of postage plus registration fee plus adequate fee for compensation A certificate of posting, which will be stamped and initialed, will be given. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Must be handed in at the Post Office counter A recorded delivery form is completed and a numbered gummed label is detached and stuck on the packet Must pay postage cost and recorded delivery fee. When handing the packet over, a certificate is initialed, stamped and handed to the sender.
Usage or Used for	All kinds of inland first class postal packets except Airway letters, Railway letters or parcels or Railex and Cash on Delivery packets.	All kinds of inland first class postal packets except Airway letters, Railway letters or parcels or Railex and Cash on Delivery packets.
Record of Delivery	The recipient on delivery signs for the packet.	The recipient on delivery signs for the packet and a record is kept by the Post Office.
Certificate of Delivery	<p>A certificate of delivery is obtained by paying an additional fee and completing an Advice of Delivery form either at the time of posting or later.</p> <p>It contains the recipient's signature if requested, if not the Post Office official will sign the certificate.</p>	<p>A certificate of delivery is obtained by paying an additional fee and completing an Advice of Delivery form either at the time of posting or later.</p> <p>The certificate will be signed by the Post Office Official and not by the recipient.</p>
Compensation	Up to a maximum of £750	Up to a maximum of £15
Restriction	Compensation for money will be made if it is enclosed in one of the special registered envelopes sold by the Post Office.	Cannot be used for money such as coins, banknotes, cheques and jewellery.
Security	Receives special security treatment	Receives no special attention and is carried with the ordinary unregistered post.

Note: Railex – conveyance of a letter of packet to a railway section by Post Office messenger for dispatch by the first available train and for its delivery by messenger from the station of destination.

Poste restante

This word means 'to be called for'

e.g. Miss J Hawkins

POSTE RESTANTE

The Post Office

Richmond

Survey

TW9 1JA

This service is mainly for people who travel often from one town to another or from one state to another and so they would not be able to have a permanent address to receive their letters or postal packets. To be able to do this they use this service where in each town or city if there is a post office, it will be their mailing address. The person concerned will have to make an agreement with the post office concerned and the post office personnel will then keep any letters or postal packets are sent to person concerned.

The conditions are:

- a. Addressee may address postal packets and letters to any Post Office to wait collection.
- b. To ensure delivery to the right person, the addressee must produce evidence of identity.
- c. At the expiry of two weeks, postal packets are treated as undelivered.

Advantage

Great use to travellers with no fixed address.

Disadvantage

Must not be used in the same town for more than three months.

C.O.D. (Cash on Delivery)

An amount of money can be collected for the sender by the Post Office before it delivers a parcel. General regulations about the C.O.D. Services are as follows:-

- a. The amount to be collected must not exceed £100.
- b. The sender must write on each parcel or packet.
 - His name and address
 - The name and address of addressee
 - The amount of money to be collected (The post office calls this the 'Trade Charge')
- c. The sender must complete a 'Trade Charge' form and affix in the space provided stamps to the value of the C.O.D.
- d. A certificate of posting will be given
- e. When the Post Office delivers the parcel and collects the money required it will send a crossed order for the amount to the sender
- f. Maximum compensation for an unregistered C.O.D. parcel is £5.

Business Reply Service

Under this service, business firms may enclose in their communication an unstamped reply card, letter card or envelope and obtain a reply from a client without putting him to the expense of paying postage. This service is not available for overseas post. The conditions include:

- A license must be obtained from the local Postmaster.
- The licensee will be required to pay in advance the sum of money sufficient to cover the amount of charges likely to incur.
- An additional fee of halfpence to the normal postage will be charged on each card returned by the post to the licensee.
- The design of the card must conform to certain standards.
- The local Head Postmaster must approve proof of the design before the cards are printed.

Freepost

The Freepost Service is a new reply method designed to encourage public responses to advertising and sales promotion campaign. It is similar to the Business Reply Service as it enables prospective clients to reply to advertisements without using postage stamps. But in this case the advantage is, the licensee does not have the expense of printing Business Reply Cards and mailing them. The conditions include:

- A license must be obtained from the Head Postmaster
- A sum of money has to be paid in advance, sufficient to cover the amount of postal charges likely to be incurred during a period of approximately one-month.
- Further payments have to be made to renew the credit from time to time.

The Freepost address is included in all the firm press and television advertisements and prospective customers can send for further information by enclosing their replies or by using postcards on which they have written the advertisers Freepost address. No postage stamp is required as the holder of the Freepost license pays the cost of postage.

Reply Coupons

If you wish a friend or client abroad to reply your letter, without him having to pay postage, you cannot send a stamped address envelope with your country's stamps. In such a case you can buy an 'International Reply Coupon' from a Post Office which may be exchanged abroad for stamps representing the minimum postage payable for a letter from that country to your country.

Below are some examples of the services provided by Pos Malaysia.

3.7 SERVICES OF POS MALAYSIA

Express Post (Pos Express)

Express Post is a fast, effective, economical and reliable means of sending urgent documents. Express Post is cheaper than courier, faster than mail. Today Express Post is growing bigger and better.

Initially Express Post was offering customers only 55 destinations, today customers can select up to 344 main destinations nationwide with 3 options of standard delivery. The 3 options are Zone A (next day delivery), Zone B (two days after posting) and Zone C (three days after posting).

Adding up to the current Express Post product line are the new 750gm. and 1 kg. Express Post Packet. Using the Express Post Packet customers can now conveniently and economically send more and more documents. Express Post On-line System enables customers to easily track their own Express Post item via <http://www.pos.com.my>.

With Express Post, customers just seal and post. Customers do not have to fill up forms or queue up at counters every time in sending their items. Moreover, Express Post not only charges customers very low rate, but also charges them only one rate for multi-destinations. Customers will also enjoy discount rates of 5 to 10 percent for bulk purchases of 100 or more Express Post Envelopes/Packets.

The Express Post Envelopes and Packets are obtainable at any nearest Post Office of Post 2020. For big organizations that need to purchase Express Post in large quantities (100 and above) regularly, they may order by phone and the postman will deliver to their premises.

Registered Mail

- Registration is a service whereby on payment of a fee in addition to the postage, a receipt is given for article at the time of posting.
- A record is kept while in the course of transit and a receipt is taken before delivery.
- The post office under certain conditions is prepared to pay compensation for the loss or damage of the article.
- Any postal packet, other than a parcel may be registered.
- The word REGISTERED, must be written or a cross-drawn on the address side of the item.
- A packet to be registered must be handed to an officer at the counter and a receipt obtained for it.
- It must not be dropped into a letterbox.

Service conditions of Registered Post

- Posted at the Post Office, Mini Post Offices and Postal Agencies only.
- Inquiry/claim to be made within 6 months from the date of posting using official form accompanied with Posting Receipt bearing the official post mark.
- Compensation will not be paid for letters containing Cash, Bank Notes, Traveller's Cheque, Share Certificates and Securities, Precious Stone and Metal, Art and Sculpture of high value.
- Posting of all prohibited items under Postal and National Laws, including Laws of Destination Country is strictly forbidden.

Cash on Delivery

- The value of goods sent by parcel post within Malaysia and to a few other countries can, on certain conditions, be collected from the addressee by the Post Office.
- The amount will be remitted to the sender by the Post Office by means of a special money order.

Ad mail Service

Ad mail is an unaddressed advertising mail house drop service that reaches every customer's door, anywhere in the nation. With Pos Malaysia's strength of almost 3500 delivery postmen, customers are assured of the highest standard of delivery available, penetrating every corner of the nation, by the people with the most extensive network in the country.

Ad mail can seek out and penetrate every region to reach customers designated target audience no matter where customers reside – local residential areas, specific business and industrial parks, or throughout the nation. Only Pos Malaysia's ad mail can reach every single address in Malaysia. No one else offers such a choice.

Here are the advantages of a huge network of Postmen; Ad mail offers 3 types of distribution service:

- Local Distribution: within local delivery of post office
- Inter-town Distribution: between towns in Malaysia
- Peninsular Malaysia to Sabah and Sarawak: and vice versa

To suit the special requirements of customers campaign needs, Post Malaysia has created 4 special delivery services:

- Economical Delivery: a cost effective choice when customer's materials are lodged 7 days prior to delivery
- Immediate Delivery: when delivery needs to be completed in 2 days.
- Weekend Delivery: when the customer wants to reach the audience on Sunday or Friday.
- Special Delivery: when there is a need to reach only to selected target audience only.

Aerogramme

- Aerogramme is a light air letter form suitably folded and gummed and should contain no enclosure.
- Aerogramme containing enclosures will be treated as ordinary airmail letters and surcharged accordingly.

Bulk Mail Service

Pre sorted bulk mail service (Domestic)

Postal items identical in appearance, weight and dimensions posted at any one time, not less than 500 articles or 1000 articles where each item exceeds 50gms in weight. It must be pre-sorted in accordance to postal sorting requirements to qualify for a 10% rebate on postage.

Bulk Mail (Overseas)

Letter post items posted in bulk by the same sender and received in the same dispatch or in separate dispatch as specified.

- 1500 items or more from the same sender in the same dispatch
- 5000 items or more from the same sender received over a period of two weeks.

Agency Services

a) Renewal and Withdrawal



Ministry of Information

- Television License
- Compound
- Register Book of TV Buyers

Ministry of Road Transportation (JPJ)

- Driving License
- Road Tax
- Renewal of Proprietor License

Registrar of Companies (ROC)

- Registrar of Business

b) Payment of Bills

Bills (House Hold)

- Tenaga Nasional Berhad (Electric Bill)
- Jabatan Bekalan Air (Water Bill)
- Telecommunications Bill
- House Assessment

Payment can be made by cash or cheque. The cheque must be made payable to 'Pos Malaysia' and crossed. On the reverse of the cheque, the account no. of the bill and phone no. of contact should be written.

c) Insurance

Malaysia National Insurance

- ILMU Plan
- Demi Sayang Plan
- Muhabbah Plan
- Budiman Plan

d) Contribution

- Employment Provident Fund
- Lembaga Urusan Tabung Haji
- SOCSO Sabah/Sarawak
- Tabung Haji Amal Jariah (Muslim Welfare Donation)



e) Banking Facility

For the convenience of the customers, transaction of money – savings or withdrawal can be made at post offices on behalf of the following banks and agencies.

- Bank Simpanan Nasional
- Amanah Saham Nasional
- Amanah Saham Bumiputra
- Amanah Saham Wawasam (ASN 2020)
- Amanah Saham Sarawak (ASSAR)
- Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA)

f) Others

Dog License

- Kedah
- Perak
- Selangor
- Negeri Sembilan
- Pahang
- Terengganu

Malaysian Postal Rates

Letter Rates

Weight Step Not Over	Malaysia	Singapore & Brunei	Other Foreign Countries
20 gm	RM0.30	RM0.40	RM0.50
50 gm	RM0.35	RM0.70	RM1.00
100 gm	RM0.50	RM1.20	RM1.50
250 gm	RM1.00	RM2.50	RM2.80
300 gm	RM1.00	RM4.50	RM5.30
400 gm	RM1.00	RM4.50	RM5.30
500 gm	RM2.00	RM4.50	RM5.30
600 gm	RM2.00	RM8.00	RM10.00
700 gm	RM2.00	RM8.00	RM10.00
800 gm	RM2.00	RM8.00	RM10.00
900 gm	RM2.00	RM8.00	RM10.00
1 kg	RM3.50	RM8.00	RM10.00
2 kg	RM6.00	RM15.00	RM18.00

Airmail Rates

Zone A	Letters		Second Class Mail		Postcards
Singapore and Brunei	Same as Surface Postage Rates		Up to 500 gm same postage rate as surface mail. Above 500 gm an airmail fee of 1.50 is charged for every 500 gm or part thereof in addition to the surface Postage.		RM0.50
Zone B	Letters		Second Class Mail		Postcards
	For first 10 gm	For every additional 10 gm	For first 10 gm	For every additional 10 gm	
Australia, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, China, Cambodia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Macao, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, and Island countries in the Pacific (except Hawaii)	RM0.55	RM0.35	RM0.40	RM0.25	RM0.50

Other services provided by Pos Malaysia are:

- PSN (Public Service Network)
- Poste Restante
- Prepaid Postage
- Official Forms and other Amenities
- Parcel Services
- Freepost Services and many more.



REFERENCES:

1. John Harrison, Secretarial Duties (10th Edition)

TUTORIAL QUESTIONS – WEEK 4

1. Mr Paul Wood, Operations Director of Nestle (M) Bhd, has agreed that you help the Personnel Department by showing a newly appointed secretary around as part of her induction. She previously worked for a small company, has no experience of franking machines and wants to know the advantages and disadvantages. What would you tell her?
2. Some incoming mail needs to be seen by more than one person or department in a firm. Suggest what can be done to make sure that three people see the contents of a letter:
 - a) when there is no urgency
 - b) when the matter is urgent
3. As a secretary, procedures must be followed to allow smooth flow of work in the office. What are the procedures in handling incoming mail and outgoing mail?

