5 FAH-1 H-100 CORRESPONDENCE

5 FAH-1 H-110 OFFICIAL DEPARTMENT OF STATE CORRESPONDENCE

(CT:CH-11; 05-18-2005)
(Office of Origin: IRM/BPC/RG)

5 FAH-1 H-111 INTRODUCTION

(TL:CH-4; 07-31-2002)

a. Communication is the most vital link to the Department of State's role in national security issues. The information exchanged must be managed properly to protect the interest of the United States Government.

b. This handbook describes how to prepare correspondence. It explains, step-by-step, all the elements involved in producing a final document that will become a part of the Department of State's official record. Each type of correspondence is carefully defined and analyzed to ensure proper use and accurate and timely completion.

5 FAH-1 H-112 GENERAL

(TL:CH-4; 07-31-2002)

a. The Department maintains records of all official communications. The State Archiving System (SAS) is the official foreign policy database that houses the central foreign policy file in the Department of State. Department personnel must provide substantive information to the Office of Information Resources Management Programs and Services (A/RPS/IPS). Substantive documents must be included in this file to ensure the integrity and completeness of this System (see 5 FAM 421.1).

b. Department offices and posts assign action as appropriate on all incoming communications. Action documents are handled and distributed by

subject content and security classification with regard to unusual sensitivity or distribution considerations indicated by using captions.

c. Official correspondence is addressed to the principal officer at post or to the head of an organizational unit in the Department. To avoid delay in answering official correspondence, all mail must be opened unless it is marked "personal."

d. All Department and post personnel must follow the procedures outlined in this handbook for preparing correspondence.

5 FAH-1 H-113 SCOPE

(TL:CH-4; 07-31-2002)

a. This handbook contains specific guidelines for preparing official Department of State correspondence. It also presents guidance on managing and drafting official correspondence and protecting classified correspondence from unauthorized disclosure.

b. Recommendations for additions, deletions, or revisions to this handbook should be forwarded to IRM's Office of Information Resources Management Policy and Regulations (IRM/*BPC*/RG), to be considered during regular reviews.

c. Personnel should consult points of contact provided in the respective chapters in this handbook for answers to questions on more specialized topics, i.e., telegrams, diplomatic notes, congressionals.

5 FAH-1 H-114 DEFINITIONS

(CT:CH-11; 05-18-2005)

Acknowledgment—Brief response to members of Congress to indicate receipt of correspondence.

Action Office—Cognizant office in receipt of inquiry for reply.

Addressee—The post, activity, or individual to whom a message is directed by the originator. Addressees are indicated as either action or information.

AMADS—Automated Message Analysis and Distribution System.

Approving Official—Person appointed to authorize release.

Attention Indicator—A telegraphic handling instruction that appears after a caption or "slug line" and indicates who at the addressee post should receive a telegram.

CableExpress—A client/server-based message handling system, using Lotus Notes and state-of-the-art data communications network technology. It is designed to allow users to receive cables, forward cables to other users, search archived cables, display referenced cables, copy cables to local databases, originate outgoing cables, and/or reply to existing cables from their desktop.

Caption—A handling instruction that is listed before any other handling instructions in the telegram text, as defined by ACP-127. A caption denotes the special nature of, or limits the distribution of a telegram.

Channel—An electrical path over which transmission can be made from one station to another.

C-LAN—Classified Local Area Network—An assembly of member terminals in a Department facility or mission that can establish and maintain a secure communications link between any two of the member terminals. Basic C-LAN functions include: telegram transmission and receipt at the desktop; telegram retrieval from storage databases; e-mail exchange with other C-LAN subscribers at post; and word processing.

ClassNet—ClassNet stands for Classified Network. It is a global network that securely transfers critical classified information through the transmission of e-mail, documents, and incoming and outgoing telegrams to Department of State employees.

CLOUT—Common LAN Outbound Telegram Release—A software package that makes possible the electronic release of telegrams from the desktop using existing e-mail systems and network infrastructure.

Congressional—Letter to or from a member of Congress.

CPR—Chief of Protocol.

DCS—Defense Communication System.

Department—Department of State offices in the United States.

Domestic—Stateside; Department of State offices in the United States.

Domestic Field Offices—Department of State offices located anywhere in the United States authorized to conduct official business.

Drafter—The person who actually composes written material in the form of official correspondence.

Drafting Office—The Office responsible for final preparation of official correspondence.

DTG—Date-Time Group. Date and time assigned to an outgoing telegram by the telegraphic processor upon receipt for transmission; the official date of the telegram. A DTG is always expressed in Zulu or GMT time.

DTS—Diplomatic Telecommunications Service.

EFTO—Encrypted for Transmission Only, classification used in Sensitive-But-Unclassified No Foreign (SBU NOFORN) telegrams.

Electronic Mail (E-mail)—The process or result of sending and receiving messages via telecommunications links between computer terminals.

Executive Secretariat InfoLink*—An S/ES Web site that contains guidance and procedures, which pertain to correspondence prepared for signature by the Secretary, other seventh-floor principals, the President, and Vice President.*

FAX—Facsimile; an exact copy of a document by electronic transmission.

Field—Restricted area on telegram form that requires specific information.

FLASH—The highest precedence designation, reserved for the most urgent telegrams containing information vitally affecting the conduct of foreign relations and requiring instant attention by the addressee, regardless of the time of day or night. Hostile Action is imminent.

Fonts—General shapes for a set of characters. Each font has a name for selecting the type and size of print.

Glossary—A place to store text that can be used again. Each piece of text is recorded and assigned a unique name.

GPO—Government Printing Office.

GSA—General Services Administration.

H—Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

Heading—The part of a telegram that precedes the text and controls the transmission, security and accountability of telegrams between the originator and addressee posts.

Host Government—A foreign government conducting business on behalf of members of a diplomatic mission in Washington.

Immediate—A precedence designator restricted to telegrams of such urgency as to require immediate attention or action during normal duty hours. Immediate telegrams are not urgent enough to require attention after regular duty hours, holidays or weekends.

Information Addressee—The post, activity, unit or command to whom a telegram is directed by the originator for information.

Inquiry—Incoming letter requesting information.

Interim Acknowledgment—Short response acknowledging receipt of inquiry with date to expect final reply.

IPC—Information Program Center.

Macro—A custom-made command or sequence of actions that is named and stored. Macros can be assigned to keys or menus.

Members of Congress—Elected officials in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

Minimize—A telegraphic communications term signifying that non-urgent, nonessential message traffic must be curtailed or reduced to a post that does not possess the means to process a normal telegraphic workload. All cable traffic being sent to a post that is in minimize must contain the phrase "MINIMIZE CONSIDERED" as the last item of text, prior to the signature.

MRN—Message Reference Number; the official identification number for telegrams originated at Department transmission facilities. The MRN consists of the post name and a sequential number that begins with the Arabic numeral 1 on January 1 each year and increases by one with each telegram transmitted by the post through December 31. The MRN for telegrams from years prior to the current year begins with the last two digits of the year.

NIACT—A handling symbol used in conjunction with the IMMEDIATE Precedence Designator to indicate a telegram requires immediate attention or action by the addressee regardless of the time of day or night. NIACT is an acronym for "night action required."

NOTAL—A term used in a multiple-address telegram, located on the reference line, placed after the referenced MRN to indicate the reference was not sent to all addressees of the telegram. NOTAL is an acronym for "not to all."

Network—An assembly of member terminals, control facilities and intercommunication facilities that can establish and maintain a communications link between any two of the member terminals.

Official Communication—Communications generated on official letterhead or form, or transmitted electronically, e.g., telegram to conduct official State Department business.

Official File Copy—see Record Copy.

Originator—One who initiates or drafts correspondence (often the sender).

Pass—In a telegram, a handling instruction requiring a post with regional responsibilities to relay the telegram to constituent posts designated in the telegram.

PC—Personal Computer; stand-alone computer equipment used to run various software packages.

Pitch—Fixed character spacing measuring width.

Point—Variable character spacing measuring height.

Post—U.S. embassy, mission, or consulate located throughout the world.

Pouch—Used generally to describe the diplomatic correspondence and privileged mail facilities of the Department of State; specifically, the sealed bag in which diplomatic correspondence and mail is carried. Also, a telegraphic handling symbol indicating those posts that will receive copies of a telegram in the diplomatic pouch, instead of an electronic transmission.

Precedence—A designation assigned to a telegram by the drafter to indicate to communications personnel the relative order and degree of urgency required in processing and dispatching a telegram, and to the addressee the order in which the message is to be noted.

Preparer—The person who actually enters the data for generating official correspondence and ensures its formal completion. This person may also be the drafter (see drafter).

PRIORITY—A precedence designator used for messages requiring rapid action and prompt delivery and which must be delivered before routine traffic.

Record Copy—Official document (paper or electronic) on official State Department business; includes copies of attachment(s) or enclosure(s), and original initials of drafter and clearance officer(s).

ROUTINE—A precedence designator used for all telegrams not sufficiently urgent to justify a higher precedence designator.

RSVP—Réspondez s'il vous plait (French); request for a reply.

SAS—State Archiving System—Official Department of State foreign policy database.

SBU—Sensitive But Unclassified—An administrative control marking which indicates that an unclassified document requires a degree of protection. This marking replaces the Limited Official Use (LOU) administrative control marking.

Scanner—An electronic device used to reproduce an exact image.

Sender—Used interchangeably with signing officer.

Seventh-Floor Principals—Department officials appointed by the President who occupy offices on the seventh floor.

Signature—Last name of the Secretary of State or Designate for the Department, or principal officer of the post or activity where a telegram originates. Not used on Department of Defense-originated messages.

Signing Officer—Used interchangeably with sender.

Special Clearances—Clearances required for specific captioned documents to control or limit distribution.

Standards—An established basis of performance used to determine quality and acceptability. As applied to information technology, standards characteristically address the implementation of technical and operating functions, and interfaces between equipment, between software packages, and between equipment and software packages. Standards become rules when an appropriate authority so determines.

Station—The communications facility at a post or activity capable of transmitting and receiving telegrams.

TAGS—Traffic Analysis by Geography and Subject.

Telecommunication—Long-distance exchange of signals, signs, text, images, sounds or intelligence of any kind, via wire, radio frequency wave, visual or other electromagnetic systems.

Telegram— In general, a written message composed in an exact format, converted by a telegraphic processor into an electronic signal and

transmitted via circuitry to a receiving station. A Department of State telegram conveys official information about Department policy, program activities, posts operation or personnel management.

Template—A timesaving pattern to shape or customize the software for a particular type of document.

TERP—Terminal Equipment Replacement Program. State currently uses the revision 5 version of this program (TERP V). TERP V is the personal computer-based configuration used by the Department to process telegraphic messages sent via the Diplomatic Telecommunications Service network. TERP V uses a Banyan Intelligent Communications Adapter configured as a front end processor to interface with the DTS network, asynchronous serial devices, a UNIX-based operating system, and a customized telegraphic processing application.

Traffic—All telegraphic messages transmitted and received.

U.S. Mission—Department of State office set up to conduct negotiations or establish relations with a foreign country.

USPS—U.S. Postal Service.

5 FAH-1 H-115 DISTRIBUTION AND CHANNEL CAPTIONS FOR NON-TELEGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

(TL:CH-4; 07-31-2002)

The following distribution and channel captions apply only to documents in the Department and do not apply to telegrams. Telegrams are covered in 5 FAH-2 H-440:

(1) **ES Sensitive.** The ES Sensitive designation is given to memoranda that the Executive Secretariat determines are of the greatest sensitivity, thereby warranting Executive Secretariat control and distribution. Designation and distribution is made by the Executive Secretariat only.

(2) **Principals Channel.** The Principals Channel designation is given to sensitive memoranda prepared by an Under Secretary for the Secretary or the Deputy Secretary, or by the Deputy Secretary for the Secretary. Distribution is made by the Executive Secretariat.

5 FAH-1 H-116 THROUGH H-119 UNASSIGNED