



कर्मचारी भविष्य निधि संगठन
EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUND ORGANISATION
श्रम एवं रोजगार मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार
MINISTRY OF LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
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E file: 42761

Dated: 13.01.2022

To,

All Addl. CPFCs, ZO

All RPFC-I /OICs, ROs

Sub: Payment of Pension to EPS '95 pensioners on the last working day of the month.

Ref: RBI Circulars dated 17.03.2016 and 01.07.2020.

Madam / Sir,

EPFO has executed agreements with numerous pension disbursing banks for credit of pension to its pensioner. Current bank agreement with pension disbursing banks states that:

"Pension will be credited on the 1st working day of the month to which the pension relates or in any case not later than 5th day of the month".

However, it has been observed that payment of pension to pensioners are not credited in the account on due date as a result of which EPS pensioners face difficulties.

Further, RBI regularly issues guidelines / directions to pension disbursing agencies for crediting pension by these banks (referred above). The manual provisions on pension disbursement by EPFO has by and large been modeled on RBI circulars issued from time to time.

The matter has been reviewed by Pension Division and keeping in line with RBI instructions, it has been decided that all field offices may send the monthly BRS to banks in such a way that pension gets credited to pensioners account on or before last working day of the month (except for the month of March that shall continue to be credited on or after 1st April). Further, it may simultaneously be ensured that actual pension is sent to pension disbursing banks not earlier than two days before it is to be credited in pensioners' accounts.

Accordingly, while taking note of the above instructions for strict compliance, all offices are advised to issue necessary guidelines / directions to pension disbursing banks under their respective jurisdiction to ensure proper implementation of the above.

[This issues with the approval of CPFC.]

Yours faithfully,

(Vishal Agarwal)
Regional P. F Commissioner-I (Pension)



भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक
RESERVE BANK OF INDIA

www.rbi.org.in

RBI/2020-21/06
DGBA.GBD.No.01/31.02.007/2020-21

July 01, 2020

All Agency Banks

Dear Sir/Madam

Master Circular - Disbursement of Government Pension by Agency Banks

Please refer to our Master Circular RBI/2019-20/57 dated September 9, 2019 on the above subject. We have now revised and updated the Master Circular which consolidates important instructions on the subject issued by the Reserve Bank of India till June 30, 2020.

2. A copy of the revised Master Circular is enclosed for your information. This circular may also be downloaded from our website www.mastercirculars.rbi.org.in.

Yours faithfully

(Charulatha S Kar)
Chief General Manager

Encl.: As above

सरकारी एवं बैंक लेखा विभाग, केन्द्रीय कार्यालय, मुंबई सेंट्रल रेलवे स्टेशन के सामने, भायखला, मुंबई 400 008
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हिन्दी आसान है, इसका प्रयोग बढ़ाएँ !

Master Circular – Disbursement of Government Pension by Agency Banks

Introduction

Payment of pension to retired government employees, including payment of basic pension, increased Dearness Relief (DR), and other benefits as and when announced by the governments, is governed by the relevant schemes prepared by concerned Ministries/Departments of the Government of India and State Governments. This Master Circular consolidates important instructions on the subject issued by the Reserve Bank of India till June 30, 2020 (listed in Appendix). It does not replace or supersede any existing government instructions on the matter. The instructions issued by Pension Sanctioning Authority of the Central and State Governments and circulated by RBI in the past will continue to remain in operation subject to changes being made by the competent authority. In case of any doubt or apparent contradiction, agency banks may be guided by the relevant government instructions. Contents of various circulars issued in this connection by the Reserve Bank of India are summarised hereunder.

General Instructions

Government orders on DR, etc. on websites

2. In order to obviate the time lag between issue of DR orders and payment of DR to the beneficiary and to render expeditious service to senior citizens, the following actions are required to be taken:

- (a) It has been decided to discontinue the procedure of forwarding government orders in respect of dearness relief etc. to pension paying agency banks. Agency Banks may, therefore, act on the copies of government orders supplied by government to them through post, fax, e-mails or by accessing from the website and authorize their pension paying branches to make payments to the pensioners immediately.
- (b) All agency banks are advised to scrupulously follow all the guidelines /instructions contained in various notifications of Government (Central as well as States) and

take necessary action immediately without waiting for any further instructions from RBI.

Timing of pension disbursement by agency banks.

3. The pension paying banks will credit the pension amount in the accounts of the pensioners based on the instructions given by respective Pension Paying Authorities.

Recovery of excess/wrong payment made to a pensioner

4. Details of the uniform procedure for recovery of excess/wrong payments made to pensioners drawing pensions under the Scheme for payment of pension to Central/Civil/Defence/Railways pensioners through agency banks have been put in place by RBI in consultation with Government of India are given below:
 - a. As soon as the excess/wrong payment made to a pensioner comes to the notice of the paying branch, the branch should adjust the same against the amount standing to the credit to the pensioner's account to the extent possible including lumpsum arrears payment.
 - b. If the entire amount of overpayment cannot be adjusted from the account, the pensioner may be asked to pay forthwith the balance amount of overpayment.
 - c. In case the pensioner expresses his inability to pay the amount, the same may be adjusted from the future pension payments to be made to the pensioners. For recovering the overpayment made to pensioner from his future pension payment in instalments 1/3rd of net (pension + relief) payable each month may be recovered unless the pensioner concerned gives consent in writing to pay a higher instalment amount.
 - d. If the overpayment cannot be recovered from the pensioner due to his death or discontinuance of pension, then action has to be taken as per the letter of undertaking given by the pensioner under the scheme.

- e. The pensioner may also be advised about the details of over payment/wrong payment and mode of its recovery.

Refund of excess pension payment to Government

5. Whenever any excess / overpayment is detected the entire amount thereof should be credited to the Government account in lump sum immediately when the excess/overpayment is due to an error on the part of the agency bank. This action is independent of recovery from the pensioner.

6. If the excess/wrong payment to the pensioner is due to errors committed by the government, banks may take up the matter with the full particulars of the cases with respective Government Department for a quick resolution of the matter. However, this must be a time bound exercise and the government authority's acknowledgement to this effect must be kept on the bank's record. The banks may take up such cases with government departments without reference to the Reserve Bank of India.

Withdrawal of pension by old/ sick/ disabled/ incapacitated pensioners

7. In order to take care of problems/ difficulties faced by sick and disabled pensioners in withdrawal of pension / family pension from the banks, agency banks may categorise such pensioners as under:

- a. Pensioner who is too ill to sign a cheque / unable to be physically present in the bank.
- b. Pensioner who is not only unable to be physically present in the bank but also not even able to put his/her thumb impression on the cheque/ withdrawal form due to certain physical defect / incapacity.

8. With a view to enabling such old/sick/incapacitated pensioners to operate their accounts, banks may follow the procedure as under:

- a. Wherever thumb or toe impression of the old/sick pensioner is obtained, it should be identified by two independent witnesses known to the bank, one of whom should be a responsible bank official.

b. Where the pensioner cannot even put his/her thumb/ toe impression and also would not be able to be physically present in the bank, a mark can be obtained on the cheque/withdrawal form, which should be identified by two independent witnesses, one of whom should be a responsible bank official.

9. Accordingly, the agency banks are requested to instruct their branches to display the instructions issued in this regard on their notice board so that sick and disabled pensioners could make full use of these facilities. Agency Banks are also advised to strictly implement the instructions issued by RBI regarding the facilities to be provided to the sick and disabled persons and sensitise staff members in the matter and to refer to the FAQs on pension disbursement hosted on our website www.rbi.org.in in case of any doubt.

Reimbursement of pension payments

10. Link branches of agency banks may submit reimbursement claims to Reserve Bank of India, Central Accounts Section, Nagpur / Government Banking Division at Regional Office for Central/State Government pension payments.

Continuation of either or survivor pension account after death of pensioner

11. All agency banks disbursing Central Government pension have been advised that in case the spouse (Family pensioner) opts for existing joint account for credit of family pension, banks should not insist on opening a new account when the spouse is the survivor and having a joint account with the pensioner and in whose favour an authorisation for payment of family pension exists in the Pension Payment Order (PPO).

Life Certificate- Issuance of Acknowledgement

12. There have been complaints that life certificates submitted over the counter of pension paying branches are misplaced causing delay in payment of monthly pensions. In order to alleviate the hardships faced by pensioners, agency banks were instructed to mandatorily issue duly signed acknowledgements. They were also advised to

consider entering the receipt of life certificates in their CBS and issue a system generated acknowledgement which would serve the twin purpose of acknowledgement as well as real time updation of records.

Single Window System for reimbursement of Pension Payments

13. Single Window System was introduced to facilitate prompt settlement of reimbursement claims and reconciliation. The underlying objective is to make each pension paying bank responsible in its own right to effect settlement without the intervention of RBI Offices or SBI (at District Headquarters) in the process eliminating cause of delay in reimbursement claims.

Customer Service

14. All agency banks may issue instructions to their dealing branches to adhere to the recommendations of the Prabhakar Rao Committee relating to pension payments. A checklist may be provided to the inspecting officers/auditors, which may at a minimum include the items given in Annex 1. Agency banks may also instruct their internal auditors/inspectors to comment on the quality of customer service in their reports which may be made available to Reserve Bank's inspecting officers, as and when they visit the branches.

15. Grievances of pensioners are not being addressed properly at the branch level especially after the setting up of Centralised Pension Processing Centres (CPPCs). To provide hassle free service to the pensioners, there should be a forum for regular interaction and settlement of grievances. Accordingly, agency banks should appoint one/two nodal officers at each Region/Zone for monitoring the resolution of grievances of pensioners on regular basis and the GM/CGM concerned should review the position at monthly intervals

16. At locations outside the CPPCs, there should be designated nodal officers for pension related complaints who should be easily accessible to pensioners and who should hold regular meetings at different locations in their jurisdiction on the lines of Pension Adalat. Each bank should establish toll free dedicated pension line manned by trained persons

with access to the database to answer queries, note down and redress complaints.

17. Following several complaints from pensioners alleging inordinate delay in disbursing revised pension and arrears, agency banks are advised as under:

- a. Pension paying banks should compensate the pensioner for delay in crediting pension/ arrears thereof at a fixed interest rate of 8 per cent per annum for the delay after the due date of payment and the compensation shall be credited to the pensioner's account automatically without any claim from the pensioner on the same day when the bank affords credit for revised pension/ pension arrears, in respect of all delayed pension payments made since October 1, 2008.
- b. Pension paying banks have been advised to put in place a mechanism to obtain immediately the copies of pension orders from the pension paying authorities directly and make payments without waiting for receipt of instructions from the Reserve Bank of India so that pensioners should get benefits announced by the Governments in the succeeding month's pension payment itself.
- c. When the agency bank is calculating pension, the branch should continue to be a point of referral for the pensioner lest he/she feel disenfranchised.
- d. All branches having pension accounts should guide and assist the pensioners in all their dealings with the bank.
- e. Suitable arrangements should be made to place the arithmetic and other details about pension calculations on the web, to be made available to the pensioners through the net or at the branches at periodic interval as may be necessary and sufficient advertisement is made about such arrangements.
- f. All claims for agency commission by banks in respect of pension payments must be accompanied by a certificate from ED/CGM in charge of government business that there are no pension arrears to be credited/ delays in crediting regular pension/arrears thereof.
- g. All agency banks disbursing pension are advised to provide considerate and sympathetic customer service to the pensioners, especially to those pensioners who are of old age.

Checklist relating to Government Business (pension related) for internal/concurrent audit

Internal inspections should assess branch performance in servicing pensioner customers. In this regard, the following may be ensured:

1. A specific questionnaire covering all aspects of pension payment may be devised for use during inspection of pension paying branches.
2. Inspecting officers may also, during inspections, call up pensioners at random and enquire about their satisfaction with pension-related services.
3. A detailed check-list relating to pension payments/government business may be given by banks to internal auditors/inspectors in order to adhere to the recommendations of the Prabhakar Rao Committee, constituted by the Government of India, relating to pension payments/government business.

These include the following:

- (a) Whether there is delay in payment of pension, revision of pension, revision in dearness relief etc.
- (b) Whether the branch manager has structured interaction with a cross section of pensioners serviced at the branch on quarterly basis, where the number of pensioners of all governments and departments exceeds a fixed number, say, 100 or 200.
- (c) Whether nominations have been obtained for all pension accounts.
- (d) Whether pension accounts have been converted into joint accounts wherever applicable.
- (e) Whether the bank branch has an effective complaint redressal mechanism and the complaints of pensioners are attended promptly and their grievances redressed expeditiously.
- (f) Whether the pension is credited to pensioner's account during the last four working days of the month except for the month of March for which pension is to be credited

on or after first working day of April.

- (g) Whether the pension paying branch obtains Life Certificate/ Non-employment certificate/ Employment Certificate from the pensioners in the month of November every year.
- (h) Whether pension paying branches deduct income tax at source from pension payments wherever applicable.
- (i) Whether paper tokens in acknowledgement of cheques presented are invariably given by the tax collecting branches.
- (j) Whether the challans are stamped giving bank's BSR code and Challan Identification Number (CIN) clearly.
- (k) Whether the stamped challans are kept in the custody of bank's staff and handed over to the concerned tax payer only on production of the paper token.

List of circulars consolidated for the Master Circular

| No. | Circular No. | Date | Subject |
|-----|--|------------|---|
| 1 | Ref.Co.DGBA(NBS)No.44/GA.64(11-CVL) 90/91 | 18.04.1991 | Scheme for payment of pension to Central Civil/Defence/Railways pensioners through public sector banks -Recovery of excess/wrong payments made to the Pensioners |
| 2 | Ref.Co.DGBA(NBS)No.50/GA.64(11-CVL) 90/91 | 06.05.1991 | Scheme for payment of pension to Central Civil/Defence/Railways pensioners through public sector banks -Recovery of excess/wrong payments made to the Pensioners |
| 3 | Ref.DGBA.GAD.No.130/45.01.001/2002-03 | 30.08.2002 | Single Window System for Reimbursement of pension payments made to Central Government Civil Pensioners by public sector banks |
| 4 | Ref.DGBA.GAD.No.H-506/45.01.001/2002-03 | 12.04.2003 | Payment of Pension to Government Pensioners through Public Sector Banks – Steps taken by Government to minimize delay in payment of Dearness Relief (DR) to Pensioners – Discontinuation of forwarding Government orders in respect of DR etc. through Reserve Bank of India. |
| 5 | <u>Ref.DGBA.GAD.No.11303/45.01.003/2005-06</u> | 06.02.2006 | Disbursement of pension through Public Sector Banks – Payment of Dearness Relief (DR) |
| 6 | Ref.DGBA.GAD.No.H-3085/45.01.001/2008-09 | 01.10.2008 | Recommendations of the Prabhakar Rao Committee on customer service – Pension Payments. |
| 7 | DGBA.GAD.No.H-3078/45.01.001/2008-09 | 01.10.2008 | Establishment of Centralised Pension Processing Centre (CPPC) |
| 8 | Ref.DGBA.GAD.No.H-7652/45.05.031/2008-09 | 03.03.2009 | Scheme for payment of pension to Central Government Civil/Defence/Railway/Telecom/ Freedom Fighters/ State Governments Pensioners by Public Sector Banks-Staggering of pension payments by PSBs. |
| 9 | Ref.DGBA.GAD.No.H-10450/45.03.001/2008-09 | 01.06.2009 | Recovery / Refund of overpayment of pension to the Government Account. |
| 10 | Ref.DGBA.GAD.No.H 3194/45.01.001/2009-10 | 14.10.2009 | Scheme for payment of pension to Central Civil/ Defence/ Railway/Telecom Pensioners/ Freedom Fighters/ State Governments' Pensioners through Public Sector Banks- Facility for withdrawal of pension by old/ sick/ disabled/ incapacitated pensioners. |
| 11 | Ref.DO.No.CSD.CO/8793/13.01.001/2009-10 | 09.04.2010 | Pension Payment to central/ State Govt. Pensioners by agency Banks-Compensation for delay |
| 12 | DGBA.GAD. No.H- 46/45.01.001/2010-11 | 02.07.2010 | Pension Payment to central/ State Govt. Pensioners by agency Banks-Compensation for delay |

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|----|--|------------|--|
| 13 | DGBA.GAD.No.H- 6212 & 6213/45.01.001/2010-11 | 11.03.2011 | Pension Payment to central/ State Govt. Pensioners by agency Banks- Compensation for delay |
| 14 | DGBA.GAD.No.H- 6760 & 6762/5.01.001/2011-12 | 13.04.2012 | Pension Payment to central/ State Govt. Pensioners by agency Banks- Compensation for delay |
| 15 | Ref.DGBA.GAD.No.H-7386/45.01.001/2012-13 | 03.06.2013 | Payment of pension to the Central Government pensioners- Continuation of either or survivor pension account after death of a pensioner |
| 16 | Ref.DGBA.GAD.No.H-27/45.01.001/2014-15 | 01.07.2014 | Redressal of Grievances of Pensioners |
| 17 | Ref.DGBA.GAD.No.H 4054/45.03.001/2014-15 | 13.03.2015 | Recovery / Refund of overpayment of pension to the Government Account. |
| 18 | RBI/2014-15/587; DGBA.GAD.No.H-5013/45.01.001/2014-15 | 07.05.2015 | Mandatory issue of acknowledgement to pensioners on submission of life Certificates |
| 19 | RBI/2015-16/340; DGBA.GAD.No.2960/45.01.001/2015-16 | 17.03.2016 | Recovery of excess payments made to Pensioners |
| 20 | RBI/2016-17/271 DGBA.GAD.No.2646/31.02.007/2016-17 | 07.04.2017 | Systems and Controls for Conduct of Government Banking |
| 21 | RBI/2017-18/111 DGBA.GBD/1616/15.02.005/2017-18 | 21.12.2017 | Prompt implementation of Governments' instructions by agency banks |
| 22 | Ref.DGBA.GBD.No.3214/45.01.001/2017-18 | 21.06.2018 | Customer Service provided by agency banks |



भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक
RESERVE BANK OF INDIA
www.rbi.org.in

RBI/2015-16/63
DGBA.GAD.No.H-1/31.05.001/2015-16

July 1, 2015
(Updated as on March 17, 2016)

All Agency Banks

Dear Sir/Madam

Master Circular - Disbursement of Government Pension by Agency Banks

Please refer to our Master Circular RBI/2014-15/110 dated July 1, 2014 on the above subject. We have now revised and updated the Master Circular which consolidates important instructions on the subject issued by the Reserve Bank of India till June 30, 2015.

2. A copy of the revised Master Circular is enclosed for your information. This circular may also be downloaded from our website www.mastercirculars.rbi.org.in.

Yours faithfully

(G. Sreekumar)
Chief General Manager

Encl.: As above

Master Circular – Disbursement of Government Pension by Agency Banks

Introduction

Payment of pension to retired government employees, including payment of basic pension, increased Dearness Relief (DR), and other benefits as and when announced by the governments, is governed by the relevant schemes prepared by concerned Ministries/Departments of the Government of India and State Governments. This Master Circular consolidates important instructions on the subject issued by the Reserve Bank till June 30, 2015. It does not replace or supersede such existing government instructions. In case of any doubt or apparent contradiction, agency banks may be guided by the relevant government instructions. Various circulars issued in this connection by the Reserve Bank of India are summarised hereunder for information.

General Instructions

(a) Government orders on DR, etc. on websites

2. In order to obviate the time lag between issue of DR orders and payment of DR to the beneficiary and to render expeditious service to senior citizens, the following action is required to be taken:

- (a) As soon as the sanction of Dearness Relief at revised rates is received from Ministry of Finance, Orders for payment of Dearness Relief to pensioners at revised rates are issued and the copies of such orders are immediately sent to Heads of all Agency Banks by e-mail as well as by FAX with instructions to take necessary action for expeditious payment of Dearness Relief.
- (b) The orders are put on website of Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievance and Pensions (<http://www.persmin.nic.in>)
- (c) Copies of orders are also sent by post to Heads of all Agency Banks and published in leading newspapers by Indian Banks' Association.
- (d) Pension paying agency banks should act on the copies of the orders supplied by Government to the Head Offices and/or Regional Offices of authorised banks in the State headquarters or hosted on the website of the State Government.
- (e) The Controlling Offices/ Head Offices of agency banks should closely monitor and supervise timely and correct disbursement of Government pension to eligible pensioners.

(b) Nomination

3. With a view to avoiding inconvenience to pensioners, all pension paying branches to accept Nomination Forms 'A' or 'B' as the case may be, submitted by Central Civil/Railway pensioners for the payment of arrears of pension to the heir(s).

4. In the case of Central Civil and Railway pensioners, the pension paying banks should endorse the names of nominees as per nomination forms 'A' and 'B' on the front page of the pass book and the branches may be advised to ensure that the procedure laid down in Schemes for disbursement of pension to pensioners by public sector banks are followed scrupulously.

(c) All India Service officers retiring from Government of India

5. The accounting procedure to be followed for payment of pension to All India Service Officers retiring from Government of India while on Central Deputation is given below:

- (a) PPO number for All India Service Pensioners would incorporate, besides the 12 digit numeric component used for Central Civil pensioner, a prefix indicating the service and the state cadre to which the pensioner belongs. A sample PPO number for an IAS Officer of Punjab cadre would be – IAS/Pb/438840400191.
- (b) All India Service Pensioners will have the option to draw pension only through the authorised banks.
- (c) The Special Seal Authority (SSA) issued by the CPAO would be in blue colour to distinguish it from authorities issued for Central Civil pensioners. In addition, the authority will indicate the State Government to which the payment is debitable.
- (d) One copy of the SSA will be sent to the concerned Accountant General for information and record.
- (e) The concerned paying branches of the bank after following the necessary procedure for identifying the pensioner would release the payment and add the name of All India Service Pensioner to the scrolls prepared for State Government Pensioners to be routed for reimbursement to the reimbursing branches of the Reserve Bank/ State Bank as the case may be. Such scrolls are NOT being handled under Single Window System of pension reimbursement for Central Government Civil Pensioners and should not therefore be sent to CPAO.
- (f) The reimbursing branches would follow the procedure for the State Government Pensioners and send advice to Reserve Bank, CAS, Nagpur and the corresponding scrolls to the concerned Accountant General.
- (g) The RBI, CAS, Nagpur would debit the concerned State Government Account as per the procedure.

(d) Credit of pension to joint account

6. Various Central Government ministries such as Ministries of Defence, Railways and Telecom, and State Governments such as Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, have modified the scheme for payment of pension permitting credit of

pension also to a joint account operated by pensioner with his/her spouse in whose favour an authorisation for family pension exists in the Pension Payment Order (PPO). The joint account of the pensioner with the spouse could be operated either by 'Former or Survivor' or 'Either or Survivor' basis subject to the following terms and conditions:

- (a) Once pension has been credited to a pensioner's bank account, the liability of the government/bank ceases. No further liability arises, even if the spouse wrongly draws the amount.
- (b) As pension is payable only during the life of a pensioner, his/her death shall be intimated to the bank at the earliest and in any case within one month of the demise, so that the bank does not continue crediting monthly pension to the joint account with the spouse, after the death of the pensioner. If, however, any amount has been wrongly credited to the joint account, it shall be recoverable from the joint account and/or any other account held by the pensioner/spouse either individually or jointly. The legal heirs, successors, executors, etc., shall also be liable to refund any amount, which has been wrongly credited to the joint account.
- (c) Payment of Arrears of Pension (Nomination) Rules 1983 would continue to be applicable to a Joint Account with the pensioner's spouse. This implies that if there is an 'accepted nomination' in accordance with rules 5 and 6 of these Rules, arrears mentioned in the rules shall be payable to the nominee.

7. Existing pensioners desiring to get their pension credited to a joint account as indicated above are required to submit an application to the bank branch, from where they are presently drawing pension in the prescribed form. This would also be signed by the pensioner's spouse in token of having accepted the terms and conditions laid down by the Ministry/Government concerned. The facility is applicable to existing / future pensioners.

8. The scheme of some states/ministries add that opening of joint account with any other person for credit of pension, except the spouse in whose favour family pension is authorised in the PPO, shall not be permissible. Family pensioners are also not covered under the revised scheme. For specific details, the scheme of each individual Ministry/State Government may be examined.

(e) Issue of Pension Slip

9. It has been decided by Central Pension Accounting Office (CPAO)/Ministry of Defence/Railway and Governments of West Bengal, Goa and Kerala to issue pension slips to their pensioners including family pensioners. Accordingly, pension slips as per the prescribed format are to be issued to these pensioners/family pensioners at the commencement of pension and thereafter, whenever there is a change in quantum of pension. Both halves of the Pension Payment Order (PPO) would also need to be updated. All agency banks were advised to issue suitable instructions to their pension paying branches.

(f) Staggering of pension payments

10. Payment of pension only on the last day of the month causes much hardship to pensioners as they have to wait in queue for a long time to collect their pension. As per instructions issued in 1995, agency banks were advised to spread disbursement of pension over the last four working days of the month, except for the month of March, which will continue to be credited on or after the first working day of April.

(g) Recovery of excess/wrong payment made to a pensioner

11. Details of the uniform procedure evolved for recovery of excess/wrong payments made to pensioners drawing pensions under the Scheme for payment of pension to Central /Civil/Defence/Railways pensioners through public sector banks, are given below:

a) As soon as the excess/wrong payment made to a pensioner comes to the notice of the paying branch, the branch should adjust the same against the amount standing to the credit to the pensioner's account to the extent possible including lumpsum arrears payment.

b) If the entire amount of overpayment cannot be adjusted from the account, the pensioner may be asked to pay forthwith the balance amount of overpayment.

c) In case the pensioner expresses his inability to pay the amount, the same may be adjusted from the future pension payments to be made to the pensioners. For recovering the overpayment made to pensioner from his future pension payment in instalments 1/3rd of net (pension + relief) payable each month may be recovered unless the pensioner concerned gives consent in writing to pay a higher instalment amount.

d) If the overpayment cannot be recovered from the pensioner due to his death or discontinuance of pension then action has to be taken as per the letter of undertaking given by the pensioner under the scheme.

e) The pensioner may also be advised about the details of over payment/wrong payment and mode of its recovery.

(h) Refund of excess pension payment to Government

12. Whenever any excess / overpayment is detected the entire amount thereof should be credited to the Government account in lump sum immediately when the excess/overpayment is due to an error on the part of the agency bank. If the excess/wrong payment to the pensioner is due to errors committed by the government, they may take up the matter with the full particulars of the cases with respective Government Department for a quick resolution of the matter. However, this must be a time bound exercise and the government authority's acknowledgement to this effect must be kept on the bank's record. The banks may take up such cases with government departments without reference to the Reserve Bank of India.

(i) Withdrawal of pension by old/ sick/ disabled/ incapacitated pensioners

13. In order to take care of problems/ difficulties faced by sick and disabled pensioners in withdrawal of pension / family pension from the banks, agency banks may categorise such pensioners as under:

- (a) Pensioner who is too ill to sign a cheque / unable to be physically present in the bank
- (b) Pensioner who is not only unable to be physically present in the bank but also not even able to put his/her thumb impression on the cheque/ withdrawal form due to certain physical defect / incapacity.

14. With a view to enabling such old/sick/incapacitated pensioners to operate their accounts, banks may follow the procedure as under:

- (a) Wherever thumb or toe impression of the old/sick pensioner is obtained, it should be identified by two independent witnesses known to the bank, one of whom should be a responsible bank official.
- (b) Where the pensioner cannot even put his/her thumb/ toe impression and also would not be able to be physically present in the bank, a mark can be obtained on the cheque/withdrawal form, which should be identified by two independent witnesses, one of whom should be a responsible bank official.

Accordingly, the agency banks are requested to instruct their branches to display the instructions issued in this regard on their notice board so that sick and disabled pensioners could make full use of these facilities. Banks are also advised to sensitise staff members in the matter and to refer to the FAQs on pension disbursement hosted on our website www.rbi.org.in in case of any doubt.

(j) Reimbursement of pension payments

15. Link branches of agency banks may submit reimbursement claims to Reserve Bank of India, Public Accounts Departments/ Central Accounts Section, Nagpur for Central/State Government pension payments.

(k) Continuation of either or survivor pension account after death of pensioner

16. All agency banks disbursing Central Government pension have been advised that in case the spouse (Family pensioner) opts for existing joint account for credit of family pension, banks should not insist on opening a new account when the spouse is the survivor and having a joint account with the pensioner and in whose favour an authorisation for payment of family pension exists in the Pension Payment Order (PPO).

(l) Digital Life Certificate

17. As per the present pension scheme, pensioners are required to furnish a life certificate to the pension disbursing bank every year in November. In view of the difficulties faced by pensioners in submission of these certificates, and in order to

alleviate these difficulties, the Government of India has since launched "Jeevan Pramaan", a digital life certificate based on Aadhaar Biometric Authentication on November 10, 2014. In order to facilitate Jeevan Pramaan, a web portal (jeevanpramaan.gov.in) was launched on November 10, 2014. All agency banks disbursing government pension may take necessary steps to implement and benefit from the scheme and issue necessary instructions to all their branches concerned and dealing staff. They are requested to work towards creating awareness about this facility amongst their pensioner customers through their branches, websites and other means. Banks may also suitably amend the FAQs on pension payments.

18. There have been complaints that life certificates submitted over the counter of pension paying branches are misplaced causing delay in payment of monthly pensions. In order to alleviate the hardships faced by pensioners, agency banks were instructed to mandatorily issue duly signed acknowledgements. They were also requested to consider entering the receipt of life certificates in their CBS and issue a system generated acknowledgement which would serve the twin purpose of acknowledgement as well as real time updation of records.

Payment of Central Civil Pension

(a) Pension Payment Orders

19. Some of the Pension Paying Bank branches do not update the amount of basic pension/family pension whenever there is change in basic rates in both halves of the Pension Payment Order (PPO) concerned. In this connection, paragraphs 12.17 and 19.1 of the "Scheme for Payment of Pensions to Central Government Civil Pensioners by Public Sector Banks" are reproduced below:

"Whenever there is change in the basic rates of pension and/or dearness relief on pension, the paying branch shall call back the pensioner's half of the PPO and record thereon the changes, indicating, inter-alia, the date(s) from which the changes are effective. After this is done, those halves will be returned to the pensioners." (Para 12.17).

"Whenever any additional relief on pensions is sanctioned by Government, an intimation to this effect will be sent by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare) to the authorised representative (by name) of each nominated public sector bank at the address given by the latter. Thereafter, it shall be the responsibility of the banks to collect through their representatives operating at Delhi or otherwise, the required number of copies (to be intimated in advance) of the sanction orders, along with the ready-reckoner relating thereto, from the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare) and send them immediately to their respective Head Offices for direct transmission to the paying branches within ten days for implementation. Each paying branch will promptly determine the revised rates of relief on pensions payable to the Central Government Civil Pensioners under its payment. The calculations of these rates applicable to individual pensioners would be made as in Annexure XXII (Page 41) and they will be noted in disburser's portion of the PPOs along with the date from which relief would take effect, under attestation by the Branch Manager or In-Charge

before commencing payment of relief at the revised rates and/or payment of arrears, if any, due to the pensioners on this account..." (Para 19.1).

Agency banks may draw the attention of their pension paying branches to the above provisions and advise them to strictly follow the instructions.

Payment of pension to Defence pensioners

(a) Delay in submission of pension payment scrolls

20. The procedure for transmission of pension payment scrolls by paying branches, link branches and reimbursing branches is stipulated in paragraphs 9(6), 10 and 11 of the booklet "Scheme for Payment of Pension to Defence Pensioners". The entire procedure detailed therein needs to be completed as per the timeframe fixed so that the payment scrolls are received at the Office of the PCDA (Pension), Allahabad latest by 15th of the following month (except for the month of March scrolls, which should invariably reach latest by 3rd week of every year). The Pension Paying Branches/ Link Branches / Reimbursing Branches are advised to put in place a more efficient system to ensure the following:

- (a) Pension Paying Branches to submit pension payment scrolls to Link Branches within the stipulated time (by 10th of the following month). No bunching of scrolls is done.
- (b) Link Branches to forward the original copy of the scroll along with summary sheet and summary documents to reimbursing banks (RBI/ SBI etc. as the case may be) by 11th of each month.
- (c) Reimbursing banks should forward the original copy of the scrolls directly to CDA (Pension), Allahabad after reimbursing pension paying bank, by debit to Government Account so as to reach PCDA (Pension) by 15th of the following month except for the March scrolls.

(b) Fake and fraudulent payments

21. The Office of the PCDA (Pension) has also noticed that in some cases of payment of gratuity and commutation amount were made to imposters on fake and fraudulent PPOs by the pension paying branches without observing prescribed checks.

(c) First payment of pension

22. It has also been observed that in the cases of first payment of pension, either PPO numbers were not mentioned on the scrolls or incorrect PPO numbers were mentioned making it difficult to verify the correctness of the payment. Further, these payments were being shown in the main pension payment scrolls along with the regular monthly payments of Defence Pensioners. The Pension Paying Branches/ Link Branches / Reimbursing Branches are advised to put in place a more efficient system to ensure the following:

- (a) In the cases of first payments of pension, pension paying branches should prepare scrolls carefully indicating correct PPO number, amount of gratuity and commutation against the name of each pensioner and submit the same separately on a monthly basis in addition to the regular monthly payment cases which will continue to be prepared separately along with separate summary sheet.
- (b) Pension paying branches should prepare separate summary sheets for regular monthly pension payment cases as well as first pension payment case.

(d) Single Window System

23. It has been decided in consultation with the Office of Principal Controller of Defence Accounts (Pension) to introduce Single Window System for reimbursement of Defence Pension with effect from April 1, 2007. Hence, the Reimbursing Banks i.e. RBI (PADs), SBI and its associate banks will cease to reimburse Defence pension payments made by the banks with effect from April 1, 2007. Pension payments transactions may be reported through Link Cell in Nagpur to Central Accounts Section, Reserve Bank of India, Nagpur for fund settlement as in the case of Central Civil Pension. The agency banks are required to send the Payment scrolls to the office of the PCDA (P), Draupadi Ghat, Allahabad.

24. All the past transactions remaining outstanding prior to April 1, 2007 for which Pension Payment Scrolls Advices are wanting shall be resolved through Reimbursing Branches of RBI/SBI and its Associates.

Payment of Pension to Railway Pensioners

(a) Fake and fraudulent payments

25. The Ministry of Railways has detected cases of fraud wherein pension/ pension arrears have been disbursed to unauthorised persons by some agency banks against fake Pension Payment Orders (PPOs). Such fraudulent payments are made by pension paying branches without observing prescribed checks such as releasing payments by relying upon calculation sheet not signed by authorised signatory, as also noncompliance with laid down procedures, especially regarding receipt of PPOs by banks. Railway pension paying branches are therefore requested to strictly follow the procedure laid down in "Scheme for Payment of Railway Pension through Public Sector Banks" by the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) for disbursement of pension to Railway pensioners to avoid fraudulent payments against fake pension payment orders.

(b) Overpayment of pension

26. A list of main areas where the banks tend to make overpayments in respect of Railway pensioners received from Financial Adviser & Chief Accounts Officer's Office, Central Railway, Mumbai is given in Annex 1. Agency banks were requested to circulate the same among their pension paying branches and instruct them to take appropriate action so as to avoid overpayments of Railway pension.

(c) Issue of Due and Drawn statement

27. All agency banks may issue suitable instructions to their pension paying branches for issuance of 'Due and Drawn' statement in the prescribed form to Railway pensioners, whenever there is a change/revision in their pension, so as to avoid inconvenience to the pensioners.

(d) Single Window System

28. The Single Window System (SWS) has been introduced in case of the reimbursement of Railway Pension payments with Bank of Baroda and Allahabad Bank effect from April 1, 2011, with United Bank of India with effect from July 1, 2011, with State Bank of India and Dena Bank with effect from July 1, 2012 and with Bank of Maharashtra and Union Bank of India with effect from August 1, 2012. Railway pension payments made by these banks will be reimbursed by RBI, Central Accounts Section, Nagpur.

Payment of Pension to Telecom Pensioners

(a) Single Window System

29. Single Window System (SWS) was introduced in the case of reimbursement of Telecom Pension payments with State Bank of India, its Associates and Nationalised Banks with effect from October 1, 2012. Telecom pension payments made by these banks will be reimbursed by RBI, Central Accounts Section, Nagpur.

Customer Service

30. All agency banks may issue instructions to their dealing branches to adhere to the recommendations of the Prabhakar Rao Committee relating to pension payments and accordingly also instruct their internal auditors/inspectors to bestow due attention to adherence to the items of work by the branches listed with respect to the checklist (provided in Annex 2) and comment on the quality of customer service in their reports which may be made available to Reserve Bank's inspecting officers, as and when they visit the branches.

31. Grievances of pensioners are not being addressed properly at the branch level especially after the setting up of Centralised Pension Processing Centres (CPPCs). To provide hassle free service to the pensioners, there should be a forum for regular interaction and settlement of grievances. Accordingly, agency banks should appoint one/two nodal officers at each Region/Zone for monitoring the resolution of grievances of pensioners on regular basis and the GM/CGM concerned should review the position at monthly intervals.

32. At locations outside the CPPCs, there should be designated nodal officers for pension related complaints who should be easily accessible to pensioners and who should hold regular meetings at different locations in their jurisdiction on the lines of Pension Adalat. Each bank should establish toll free dedicated pension line manned by trained persons with access to the database to answer queries, note down and redress complaints.

33. Following several complaints from pensioners alleging inordinate delay in disbursing revised pension and arrears, agency banks were advised as under:

- (a) Pension paying banks should compensate the pensioner for delay in crediting pension/ arrears thereof at a fixed interest rate of 8 per cent for the delay after the due date and the compensation shall be credited to the pensioner's account automatically without any claim from the pensioner on the same day when the bank affords credit for revised pension/ pension arrears, in respect of all delayed pension payments made since October 1, 2008.
- (b) Pension paying banks have been requested to put in place a mechanism to obtain immediately the copies of pension orders from the pension paying authorities directly and make payments without waiting for receipt of instructions from the Reserve Bank so that pensioners should get benefits announced by the Governments in the succeeding month's pension payment itself.
- (c) System of attending to customer service including pension payments may be reviewed at periodical intervals.
- (d) The branch should continue to be a point of referral for the pensioner lest he/she feel disenfranchised.
- (e) All branches having pension accounts should guide and assist the pensioners in all their dealings with the bank.
- (f) Suitable arrangements should be made to place the arithmetic and other details about pension calculations on the web, to be made available to the pensioners through the net or at the branches at periodic interval as may be necessary and sufficient advertisement is made about such arrangements.
- (g) All claims for agency commission in respect of pension payments must be accompanied by a certificate from ED/CGM in charge of government business that there are no pension arrears to be credited/ delays in crediting regular pension/arrears thereof.

Training

34. In order to create better awareness among staff about pension payment schemes/ rules, banks may include this as an integral part of the training programmes conducted by their training establishments.

35. Regular training session for bank personnel dealing with pension matters may be organised in consultation with concerned Government Department.