

1. **Factual Note through Fax/E-mail**

Factual Note in regard to referred questions should **be furnished** by the Ministries/Departments expeditiously by **E-mail/(Fax No. 23035344) followed by note duly signed in original.** All correspondence sent for furnishing facts should be acknowledged by the Ministries/Departments concerned. Where the facts are not received by the stipulated date, the Lok Sabha Secretariat shall take appropriate decision in the matter, on merits.

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

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

3. **Advance copy of the admitted questions**

Advance copies of the provisionally admitted questions are sent online to the Ministry/Department to facilitate them for collection of material for preparation of answer. The Ministries/Departments are, therefore, requested to **furnish e-mail id of the Parliament Section or any other designated Officers/Branch(es)** to whom advance copy of admitted notice(s) of questions can be forwarded.

Immediately on receipt of the advance copy, the Ministry/Department is expected to go through the contents of the notice and furnish their comments suo-moto. In the event where the Ministry/Department feels that the notice suffers from any infirmity **viz the Government of India is not primarily responsible; matter being pending in a court of law; etc.** or that the question lacks factual basis, etc. the same may be brought to the notice of the Joint Secretary/Director-in-charge of Question Branch as expeditiously as possible and in any case within 24 hours of the receipt of such advance notice. Where a communication is received beyond this period and/or after Question List has been printed, it will not be possible to reconsider the admissibility of a question in the light of facts furnished.

4. Transfer of Notices of question

Immediately on receipt of provisionally admitted notice of questions online or otherwise, the concerned Ministry/Department should ascertain and ensure administrative jurisdiction. Where the subject matter of a question is the concern of a Ministry/Department other than the one to whom it is originally addressed, it is incumbent upon the Ministry/Department to whom the question has been originally addressed by the Member, to move transfer of the question to the Ministry concerned and obtain acceptance/consent from transferee Ministry/Department. Under no circumstance, the transfer of notice of question will be effected unless and until intimation about the acceptance of the transfer of the question is received in the Secretariat from the accepting Ministry well in time i.e 10 days prior to the date of answer. Any request received thereafter shall not be entertained. As informed by the Cabinet Secretariat, if the thrust of a question pertains to a particular Ministry, it is for that Ministry to answer the question in consultation with other Ministries concerned.

5. Ministry/Department responsible for answering of questions

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

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

6. Circulation of Lists of Hard and Soft copies of Admitted Questions

The printed copies of List of admitted **Starred** questions for a particular day are circulated five days before the date of answer of the questions by the respective Ministries/Departments. Circulation of hard copies of Unstarred List of Questions has been dispensed with. However, the soft copies of List of Questions, i.e. Starred and Unstarred, are **available on the website** of Lok Sabha i.e. <http://loksabha.nic.in> six days prior to the date of answer. **Corrigenda**, if any, pertaining to the listed questions are issued by the Secretariat from time to time and is **available** on the webpage of Lok Sabha. Ministries/Departments may generate the hard copies of Lists and Corrigenda as soon as they are available on the above website of Lok Sabha and take appropriate action thereon.

7. Name of Department to be mentioned in Reply

It has been observed that many a time, the name of the Department concerned is not mentioned in the reply by the Ministry. Ministries are requested to mention the name of the Department concerned to whom the reply pertains, immediate beneath name of Ministry at the top.

8. Replies to questions

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

Ministries/Departments may note that replies should be prepared taking into consideration the text of questions as appearing in the Question List and not merely rely on the index appended to the list.

9. **Reference of website in the replies by the Ministries/Departments**

It has also been noticed that some of the Ministries are quoting/referring their website in reply/replies to question(s) especially in Starred Questions. In the absence of requisite information in the reply itself, Members are deprived of their right to ask pointed supplementaries to Starred Questions. The Ministries/Departments are, therefore, advised to avoid the reference to website to the extent possible and the requisite information may be provided in the reply itself.

10. **Assurances in reply to a Starred Question**

As per convention developed over the years, **assurances are generally not given in reply to a Starred Question**. The Ministries/Departments are, therefore, **advised to refrain from furnishing assurances in reply to a Starred Question**. **Where the Ministry feels that reply to a Starred Question shall result in Assurance only, this fact may be brought to the notice of Joint Secretary/Director-in-Charge immediately on receipt of advance notice of question**. This will facilitate the Secretariat to take up the matter with the competent authority for appropriate direction in the matter.

11. **Supply of Hard Copies of Replies to Questions**

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