

**Implement and maintain basic administration  
systems of a CBO  
Level 4**

**- Learner Manual -**

**The development practice project**

These learning materials were generated by the Development Practice project, hosted by the [Sustainability Institute](#) and in partnership with [Community Connections](#), [AIDS Consortium](#) and [Keystone](#). This project generated a set of competence standards with development practitioners in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban, between 2005 and 2009. This manual is part of a set of materials consisting of a competence standard, learner's manual, facilitator's guide and an assessment tool. More information on this project is available on the [Development Practice](#) website.



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- The project team for logistics, coordination and editing

Questions and queries on the project and materials can be forwarded to [info@developmentpractice.org.za](mailto:info@developmentpractice.org.za).





# LICENSING

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## OVERVIEW

Welcome to this manual on ***Implement and maintain basic administration systems of a CBO***. The manual will assist you to acquire knowledge, skills and values to implement and maintain basic administration systems in your organisation more effectively.

This learner manual, accompanied by a facilitated programme of activities, should be followed by practical 'on-the-job' experience and practise (supported by a mentor if possible). Once you have read through this learner manual, done all the exercises, implemented the learnings in your organisation, you will be ready to have your competence assessed, if you choose.

Below follows the Specific Outcomes and Assessment Criteria that this learner manual is based on. This means that at the end of your learning period, you will be able to practice all the points listed below. During the learning period you will be reminded to keep and file proof of your work. This is called a Portfolio of Evidence. It is a collection of evidence to show what was learnt during the course and from past experience, including all other training courses attended. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is when all your learning is taken into account and acknowledged when assessed for a specific standard. Outcomes are the result of your learning. At the end of each section there is a symbol for you to check your understanding.

Please read the competency standard below carefully.





## SPECIFIC OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Specific outcomes	Assessment criteria
<p><i>Competence in this standard means that the learner has clearly shown that s/he is able to...</i></p>	<p><i>Tasks and activities completed by the learner contain the following evidence of competence...</i></p>
<p>1. Set up and maintain a basic filing system</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Useful categories for a filing system are identified (funders, staff, organisational documents)</li> <li>2. Ordered and accessible files are kept (labelling, use of file dividers, alphabetical ordering etc)</li> <li>3. Current files are up to date and accessible</li> <li>4. Legal requirements for record keeping are explained and complied with (Retention period for documents; Types of documents; Approval of minutes etc)</li> <li>5. Important and legally required documents are archived (for up to 5 years) and kept accessible (Reports; Board Minutes; Contracts; Financial records; significant correspondence etc)</li> <li>6. Ways to improve and streamline filing systems are identified.</li> </ol>
<p>2. Use basic tools for organizing work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic time management tools are identified and used (Calendar, timetables or diaries)</li> <li>• Methods to manage tasks are described and used (to-do lists, checklists, rosters, job lists etc)</li> <li>• Advantages and disadvantages of different tools are</li> </ul>

	discussed.
3. Keep relevant day-to-day records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate minutes that capture the main points of meeting are kept (staff meetings, board meetings)</li> <li>• Examples of relevant records that should be kept are provided (for example registers, significant correspondence etc)</li> </ul>
4. Manage basic office functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List items needed in a basic office (stationary, telephone, desk etc)</li> <li>• A neat and ordered office space is maintained (within the constraints of the under-resourced environment)</li> <li>• Demonstrate use of basic office equipment (fax machine, telephone etc)</li> <li>• Criteria for creating a welcoming environment are listed (Visitors greeted and attended to; appropriate telephone and reception manner displayed)</li> <li>• Communication is dealt with and managed responsibly (correspondence; telephone calls, messages; visitors)</li> <li>• Administrative rules and procedures are described and documented when necessary</li> </ul>

Assessment can be based on a combination of simulated activities, workplace tasks and observation of actual administrative systems in place.

The information in brackets suggests but does not limit an appropriate range of criteria for assessment



A basic administration system at this level would include: files covering a number of different activities and or projects; staff records; minutes of different meetings; correspondence with different stakeholders; more than 1 funder. The learner at this level should be able to set up and adapt a system.

**Note:** Tasks may be presented for an actual or hypothetical organisation but must be learner's original work and not copied from existing documents. Learners should be able to explain and justify their statements.





## ACTIVITIES

There are a number of activities in the manual. These activities are an important part of the learning approach and you are encouraged to complete them as part of your learning process. They will become part of your own “toolkit” to help you operate more effectively. Some of these activities can also be used as part of your portfolio of evidence (PoE), which you need to compile if you wish to be assessed for competence in this standard.



## Symbols used in this workbook



### Important thought

This sign shows an important thought or idea for you to take note of.



### Definition

When you see this sign, a term is explained here.



### Self-test

This designates a self-test section - this is an opportunity for you to check your understanding and if you are unclear, to discuss with your trainer.



### Case study/Example

Case studies or examples will tell you about a practical application of something that has been discussed or covered in the course.



### Individual activity

This sign marks an activity – either during the class or as homework. These activities are important to complete – both for your understanding but also as they can be included as part of your Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) for assessment.

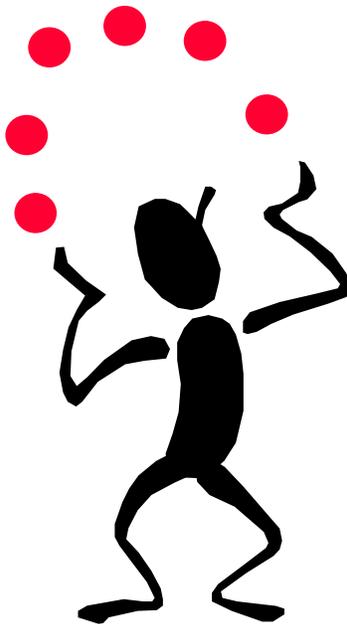


### Group activity

This sign means that this activity is a group work activity.

## INTRODUCTION

The office of a CBO is usually a busy place. Your office might be at someone's home or in a building with other offices. Maybe you have your own office or maybe you are sharing an office with another organisation. The office is the place where many of the organisations management, administration and planning happens. For many CBOs the space that is available for an office is small and therefore it is very important that the systems in the office are well run. Good administrative systems will allow your organisation to function more effectively. This means that you need to be able to find information easily, keep good records of all the activities of the organisation and create a good environment for all who come to visit your office. In this manual we will look at these things.





## ADMINISTRATION SYSTEMS

### What is an administration system?

Good administration systems are a key part of running your organisation effectively and smoothly.



#### Definition

Administration is the management of an organisation's affairs and systems – organising in such a way that the organisation performs properly

An administration system consists of different aspects and tools, such as:

- A positive and welcoming environment in your office
- A well functioning office with the necessary furniture and equipment
- Rules and procedures that guide and manage your administration systems
- Good recordkeeping of important documents and day-to-day records
- Systems and tools to ensure good communication in your office

### Notes

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## How to create a welcoming environment at the office



### Definition: Reception

Reception is the first place where people from outside make contact with your organisation. At reception you welcome and direct visitors and clients to the right person in the organisation.

Receiving your clients and visitors well is an extremely important part of running your office effectively. The atmosphere that you create in your office is therefore very important and is often the first step in building relationships with the people who use your service or come to visit your organisation and to create a positive image of your organisation.

### Why are public relations important for your office?

It is important that the community thinks about you in a positive way because all organisations need to be trusted and supported by their target group and/or members.

People who use your services will expect you to be helpful, friendly, efficient and professional. Most people will contact you by visiting your office or by phoning you. This means that the phone and office are two of the most important areas where you should create a positive image.

If your interaction with the public is bad, it can have a negative effect on your organisation's reputation



### Important thought

REMEMBER: It is much easier to build a good public relations culture in your organisation, than it is to reverse a bad image once it exists.

Every person in your organisation should understand the importance of good public relations and know what role they should play in promoting a positive image.

### Notes

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## Important things to know about public relations

The atmosphere you create in your office and the image you send out to the community is aimed at your members, clients, funders and any other person that might come into contact with the organisation.

The following questions can help you to decide on the image you want to send to people:

- What does the organisation support and what do we want people to know about it?
- What are the main services we provide and how do we make it accessible to people?
- What do we want people to feel when they come into our office or use our services?
- Who are our main clients and what will make them comfortable/uncomfortable?
- What is the first thing we want people to notice when they come into our office?
- Who will receive visitors?





## Interpersonal skills

Basic interpersonal skills that will help you to create a positive and welcoming environment in your office will include the following:

- Be friendly and polite to everyone who comes to your office
- Address staff and volunteers in a respectful manner
- Listen to people when they speak to you
- Deal with visitors in a polite way

## How to make your office welcoming for visitors

The front office is the reception area. This is the area that every person will come to first before being seen by the relevant person. It is the public face of your organisation and where people will get their first impression.

The front office serves the following functions:

- **Receiving visitors** – in most organisations, visitors will spend some time in the reception area before being seen by another person. It is very important that you receive people properly, make them feel comfortable and deal with them professionally.
- **Giving information** – Not all visitors come for appointments with other staff. The reception offers other types of assistance – they give information brochures or provide a referral service.



- **Dealing with telephones** – All of us have experienced the frustration of rude and incompetent telephone receptionists. It is very important to deal with telephone calls properly [see Part Four How to Deal with Telephone Calls]

These functions are very important to the organisation and everyone should be aware of it. Here are some tips that will help improve the way you run your reception area.

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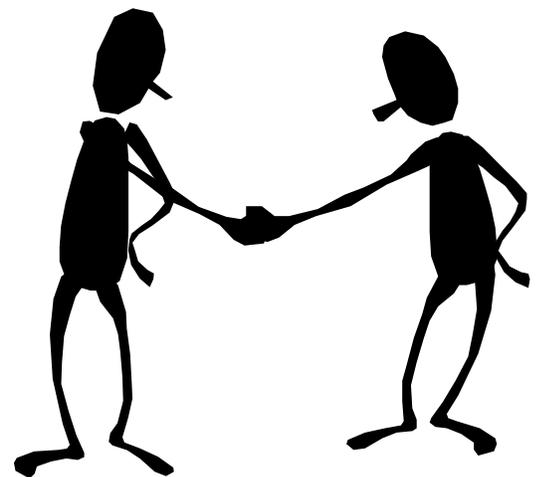
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### Receiving visitors

The reception area is the first contact that people have with an organisation. The work of the reception area differs from one organisation to the other depending on the type of service that is provided by the organisation. A system to run the reception efficiently should be developed, use the following as a guideline:



- Make sure every visitor feels welcome and is greeted as soon as they enter the reception area. Be friendly and welcoming.
- Find out who s/he has come to see or what the purpose of the visit is.
- Find out if they have an appointment to see someone. If not, ask if you can assist. You may be able to give the required assistance or advice immediately and you have a satisfied client.
- If you cannot help and the organisation allows visitors at any time, find out if the person that they have come to see is available at that particular time. Make sure that you inform the relevant person before you send visitors to see them.
- If the person is not available, find out if there is anything you can do to help:
  - You can ask the visitor to wait if the person will not be away for long, offer them something to drink and read.
  - Take the visitor's details and make sure that you write the message clearly and legibly.
  - Assure the visitor that the message will be delivered to the right person.
  - If you cannot give assistance, call on someone who can. Never give false information or incorrect advice. Always have available your organisational brochures, pamphlets and simple documents that will assist you in giving the correct information to the relevant people.

### **Staff behaviour**



- They need to understand the work of the organisation and be able to answer common questions.
- They must learn about the organisation, attend staff meetings and learn from others - you should know everything that goes on in the organisation.
- Always speak to people in a friendly, clear and pleasant manner.
- Always be polite, and never lose your temper.
- Make people feel special at all times.
- Be professional and if people need to wait, tell them how long it will take before someone will see them.
- Greet anyone who arrives immediately and ask how you can help them
- If you are busy when someone arrives, do not just ignore them, smile and give them a sign, tell them someone will be with them soon.
- Do not talk to other staff members while someone is waiting to be greeted.
- Never get into arguments in front of people in the reception area or gossip about other staff members.
- Dress in the manner that is suitable for your office
- Never disclose information that is private and confidential
- Never act offensively - offensive behaviour includes smoking at your desk, swearing, making personal telephone calls, speaking very loudly, chewing, etc



- Always keep your work station/office tidy so that it looks professional and efficient.
- Avoid using the telephone for personal calls.
- Provide a pleasant environment
- Put a sign outside your office so that it is easy to find
- Use signs to identify reception, offices or waiting rooms so that people can easily find the right place
- Make sure you have seats for people who have to wait
- Decorate the reception area so that it is comfortable and welcoming
- Put magazines, books or pamphlets in the waiting area for people to read.
- Offer people tea or coffee if you can afford it or put a jug with water and glasses in the area.

### **How to deal with telephone calls**

Deal with telephone calls in the same way as you deal with visitors – be polite, helpful and friendly. Put people through as quickly as possible – if someone is not available, get back to them and take a message. There is nothing worse than holding on for a long time – it wastes people’s time and money.

### **Notes**

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### **Setting up and displaying information in your office**

As your reception area is the first place that people will see when they come into your office, it is important that it looks good. Some of the things that you can do to make it look welcoming are:

- If you have nice photographs of the organisations' activities, make a nice poster of them and put them on the walls of the office. That not only gives people an idea of the work that you do, but will also look friendly and welcoming.
- If your organisation has a Code of Conduct for its members, you can display it in the office. This will tell people something about the character and values of your organisation.
- Always make sure that the reception area is neat and tidy.
- If you have pamphlets or other information that you would like to share with people who come to your office you can put it out on a little table for people to take and read.



- Other information and posters that are related to your work can also help to create a welcoming and positive atmosphere in your office.



## Individual activity

1. Make a list of all the things you can do to make your office environment more welcoming. Remember to look at the following:
  - Receiving visitors
  - The way your staff behave
  - The way the telephone is answered
  - The set-up or 'look' of the office.

Share your ideas with your group members.

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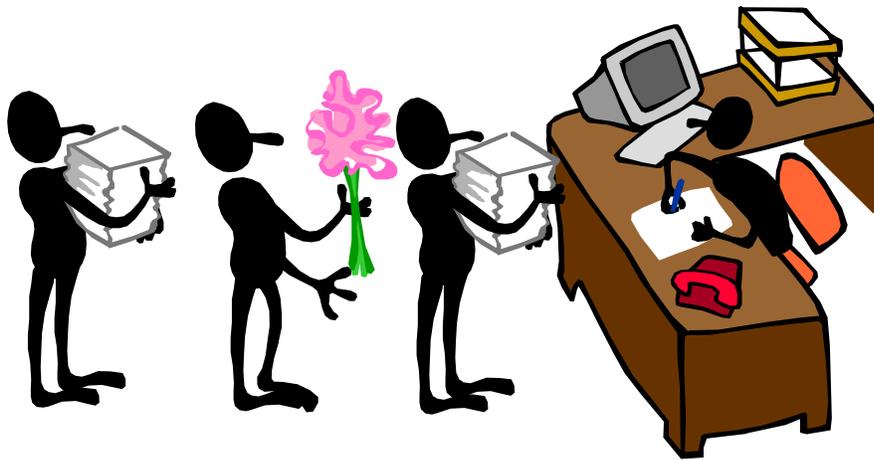






Your office might be in someone's home or you might have an office at the clinic. Maybe you are sharing your office with another organisation. Where your office is might impact on what you have available to set up your office. Some of the basic things that are necessary to have in your office are:

- A desk or table where you can write and do your administration work
- Chairs
- Telephone – it would be best to have a landline as it is much cheaper than using a cell phone.
- Basic office stationery e.g. paper, pens, stapler, paperclips etc.



Depending on the resources that you have available there are other office furniture and equipment that help to create an effective and efficient work environment:

- Filing cabinet to keep your files
- Cupboard for stationery and other office supplies that can be locked
- Office equipment like a fax machine, computer, printer and photocopier
- Board room table for meetings

- Extra chairs for visitors or clients
- Notice board
- Kitchen facilities e.g. to make tea



### Important thought

When you are looking at the different things that you need for your office - keep in mind that you might need to look at the security of the office as well to ensure that your things are not stolen or damaged. If you have computers and other equipment like a fax machine or photocopier, you might need to ensure that the building has burglar bars or an alarm system. You might also need to find out about insuring your office equipment.

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## How to keep the office neat and ordered

As we have already said, our offices might be in different settings. Keeping your office space neat and ordered (everything has a place) is very important.

Some tips for keeping your office and work space neat and ordered:

- Pack away or file documents or papers that you are not working with at that time
- Don't have unnecessary things lying around in the office
- If your office is very small, don't bring things to the office that you will not need there
- Store your office stationery in a cupboard so that things can be kept neat and tidy

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## Group activity

1. Divide your group into 3 smaller groups and ask each group to look at one of the office settings that you might find yourself in:
  - Office at someone's home
  - Office at the clinic or other place of work
  - Office that you share with another organisation
2. Let each group look at ways to ensure that the office space in each of the above situations is kept neat and ordered.
3. Give feedback to the bigger group and discuss the possible solutions.

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## How to use office equipment

Some of us might not be used to working with the different machines and equipment we find in the office. Let's look at the basic instructions for using some of the common office equipment.

- **Telephone**

For most of us using a telephone is easy because we use it almost every day. In an office environment there are some rules for using the telephone, which we will discuss a bit later, under telephone manner.



- **Fax machine**

When you buy a fax machine for your organisation they come with the instructions on how to use them. Most fax machines today are quite easy to use. The basic instructions to use a fax machine are:

1. Place the pages that you want to send, with the writing faced down in the fax machine.
2. Dial the fax number that you want to send your fax to and press the START /SEND button. The fax will automatically be sent when the signal comes through.

3. If you have an older fax machine you might have to wait for the signal and then press the START/SEND button to send the fax.



To receive a fax, make sure that your fax machine is turned on and that you have paper in the fax machine. When the fax rings it will automatically receive the fax and print it out.

Some phones can also work as a fax machine. In this case there are different settings on the front of the phone that shows in which mode it is.

<b>PHONE</b>	<b>PHONE/FAX</b>	<b>FAX</b>
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- When the phone is on PHONE it will ring and you can answer the phone. If someone then wants to send a fax, you will have to press the FAX button. Sometimes it might be necessary to tell the person on the other end of the call to please call back and then you put the phone in FAX mode, so that it will automatically receive the fax.
- If the phone is in PHONE/FAX mode you need to answer the phone, before 5 rings if you want to use it as a phone. If you let it ring for longer, the FAX mode will automatically come on.

- **Computer and printer**

Being able to use a computer and printer is a very good skill to have and will help you with your administration system in your office. Many smaller CBOs however, do not have a computer. If you are lucky to have one, it will be a good idea to do a computer course to learn the basics needed to use your computer effectively.



To use the printer with your computer, remember the following:

- Make sure the printer is plugged in to the computer.
- Make sure the printer software is loaded on the computer so that your computer can read the printer.
- Make sure the printer is switched on when you want to use it.
- Make sure your printer has paper in it.

If you experience problems with your printer, use the HELP function available.

- **Photocopier**

A photocopier is a very useful machine to have in your organisation. Many smaller CBOs may not have their own photocopier, but you may share with someone else or use one at a photocopy shop.

A photocopier is used to make lots of copies of the same document e.g. when you have to make 10 copies of the minutes of a meeting, it is cheaper to photocopy them than to print them on the computer printer.

Some photocopiers are very sophisticated and have lots of special functions, but the basic functions that you need to know are:

- Copying
- Sorting





## Individual activity

1. It is important that you practice how to use all the office equipment. For the purpose of this activity you will have to practice on the following machines:
  - Telephone
  - Fax machine
  - Computer and printer
2. If you have these machines in your organisation you can practice on them. If you do not have them, ask one of the bigger organisations in your network if you could practice on their machine.
3. See if there is an instruction brochure or leaflet that has come with the machine. If there is one, follow the instructions to:
  - Answer and make a telephone call
  - Send and receive a fax
  - Print a letter from the computer (if you do not use a computer in your organisation, this might not be necessary)

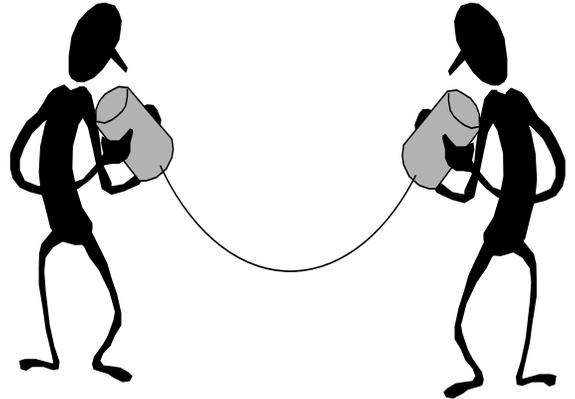
If the machine has not come with its own instructions, use the basic instructions given above to help you or ask someone who knows how to use the machine to show you. Practice on your own until you feel confident that you are able to use the machine.

## Good communication in the office

Telephone manner is vital in any organisation or business as it is often the first impression of your organisation that people will get.

### What to say when answering the phone

- The best way to answer the phone is –  
"Name of organisation, hello, how can I help you?"
- If you have to put someone through, say "  
Please hold, I am putting you through"
- If the line is engaged, say: "S/he is on a call, would you like to hold or can I take a message?"



### Rules for answering the telephone

- Always be polite and welcoming.
- Keep your conversation as brief as possible without sounding rude or in a hurry
- Make sure that you know your telephone system and are able to use all the facilities.
- Do not allow the phone to ring more than three times, this may give an impression that you are not there.

## Tips for answering telephones

- Get organised. Have the basics like pens, desk pads, message books, etc, handy. Know your job and try to anticipate what is needed e.g. if queries are always the same, make sure that you have the information at hand.
- Decide as an organisation whether you should ask "who may I say is calling?" This must be discussed in the organisation – is it acceptable to ask the callers who they are or should you just put the calls through. This may sometimes be a problem.
- If you are expected to screen the calls this should not be a problem at all.
- Ask the caller how you can help or what their problem is. Listen attentively and let the caller know this. Avoid interruptions while you are listening to someone on the phone.
- When transferring calls never make the caller wait too long. If the recipient of the call is busy, go back to the caller and ask if you can take a message. Assure him/her that you will pass on the message to the relevant person.
- When taking a message always read it back to the caller to make sure that you have taken the message correctly – especially phone numbers. Thank the caller. Never slam the receiver in the ears of the caller.
- Develop a proper system for passing on messages. If a message was not passed on and the call seemed urgent, phone the caller back, explain and ask if you can help in any way.



## Correspondence

Another important part of good communication in your office is the way in which all correspondence – letters, faxes and emails are handled. Using an incoming mail record-sheet that lists all correspondence received is a good way to make sure that things are dealt with and not forgotten. Look at the examples on page 97 & 98. You can also develop some rules around the handling of all correspondence. We will look at these in the next section.

## Messages

One of the major problem areas that arise in organisations when it comes to administration is the issue of messages!!! Making sure that the right person gets a message when they were not in the office is absolutely essential if you are going to have an office that is run smoothly. Ensure that you have a system in place for taking messages and that all staff and volunteers know what the procedures are. It is also a good idea to have a special book for taking messages so that all messages can be written down. Most telephone message books have a duplicate page in them so that you can take the message, tear it out and give to the person who the message is for, but still have a copy in the book, in case someone loses the message.

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## Example: Telephone message

### While you were out

To: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Caller: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

From: (organisation) \_\_\_\_\_

Their phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone back

They will phone you back

Left this message:

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Message taken by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Administration rules and procedures

In the same way as you have different policies and procedures for your staff and volunteers in the organisation, it is important to have some rules and procedures for the administration of your office. These rules should include who is responsible for the administration systems and what the internal rules of the organisation are.

These rules need to apply to:

- Records that must be kept
- Correspondence
- Telephone use
- Use of office equipment and resources e.g. stationery
- Dealing with visitors

### Records that need to be kept

We have already discussed the documents and how long they need to be kept in terms of the legal requirements. Refer to the list of records that need to be kept on page 62. If your organisation has a secretary this will be part of their job. If you do not have a secretary you need to select a person who will be responsible for this task and write it into the procedures for record keeping.

### Correspondence

Some rules for correspondence are:



- Always make sure that when a letter is sent it looks professional. If your organisation has a letterhead then all letters and faxes should be sent on an official letterhead.
- Make sure that correspondence to funders are always signed by the right person e.g. the Chairperson of the Board
- Make sure that all correspondence has the name and address of the organisation and a contact telephone number so that people can contact the organisation if necessary.
- Decide who in the organisation has the authority to send out letters to funders, the media etc.
- All correspondence should be clear and concise. If you can get someone to check the spelling and grammar of your letter before you send it out, it will be a good idea.

## Telephone

- You need to make a rule about personal telephone calls. It is important that personal calls do not interfere with the work of the organisation and does not contribute to the increased costs of the organisation – cell phone calls can be very expensive!! It might be an idea that all personal calls need to be written down with the number dialled and then costs can be worked out at the end of the month. Another rule might be that no personal calls may be made from the office, but emergency calls may be received. If there are personal calls keep them short and only make them if absolutely necessary.



- A telephone record sheet should be kept where all telephone calls made are recorded with the date, time, duration and their purpose stated. This allows for the monitoring of expenses and holds staff accountable for organisational costs (costs can be controlled).
- The person responsible for answering the telephone at the office needs to always answer the phone according to the telephone process agreed to by their organisation.
- Make sure that everyone, staff and volunteers know what the rules are for the use of the phone.

### **Smoking Restriction**

- Smoking is not permitted in public buildings in South Africa. You therefore need to have a smoke free policy in your office as well. If your office is at someone's home you need to decide with them what the rule is about smoking.
- You could allow people to smoke in areas outside the building.

### **Visitors**

- Visitors to the office should be addressed quickly and friendly. If visitors arrive at the office the person in reception needs to receive them and ask them how they can help. See page 19 for tips on receiving visitors.



- Every effort should be made to schedule personal visits during lunch or break periods. Personal visits during office hours should be discouraged.
- The organisation should decide if children can be brought to work or if they should use alternative child care. Having children at the office can be disruptive but the organisation needs to decide what the rule for this will be.

### Dress code

- Staff and volunteers should always dress appropriately for work.
- If you are running a home-based care service you might have uniforms for your volunteers that provide this service.



### Individual activity

1. Look at the different aspects for which you need to develop rules and procedures in your organisation in terms of the administration system:
  - Records to be kept
  - Correspondence
  - Telephone
  - Visitors
  - Smoking
  - Dress code





## Self-test

You should be able to:

- List the items needed for a basic office
- Maintain a neat and ordered office space within the constraints of your resources
- Demonstrate the use of basic office equipment
- List the criteria to create a welcoming environment
- Manage and deal with all communications in your office responsibly and effectively
- Describe and document any administrative rules and procedures that you may need in the organisation

Please ask your facilitator if you are unsure of any of the above.

## BASIC TOOLS FOR ORGANISING YOUR WORK

It is important to look at the tools that are needed to ensure that you have an overall administration system that works well.

### Time management



#### Definition: Time management

Good time management is the ability to manage your day in such a way that you are able to achieve all tasks that you have planned for that day, as well as to have a good balance between work, free time, sleep and personal time.

Ever notice that the time you have to work on a project or report often disappears with very little actually being completed? Learning how to use your time effectively is an important skill if you are going to run things in your organisation effectively.

### Notes

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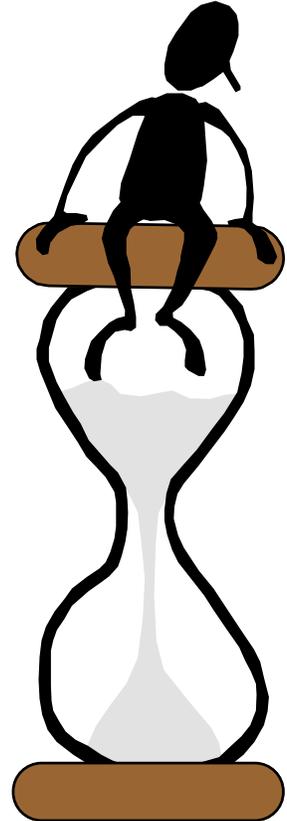
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There are a number of tools that can help you to manage your time better. Before you start working on any task look at the following:

- Make sure that you understand the task and what is to be completed.
- When working in a group, discuss the task to make all members understand what is to be done.
- List all activities that must be done to complete the task.
- Prioritize your tasks. On your list, number the tasks in order of importance. Rewrite the list if necessary. Make sure the tasks can be completed in a timely manner. Be realistic about the allocation of time to tasks.
- When working in a group, delegate responsibilities. Divide up the tasks as equally as possible and assign people jobs that best complement their strengths or skills.
- Plan what needs to be finished by when. Individually or as a group, set deadlines so as not to get stuck on a particular task.
- Once you have your personal list of priorities, start on the most important one. If it is a larger task, divide it into smaller ones.
- As you finish a task, cross it off your list. This will give you a sense of accomplishment and show that you are really making progress.
- Concentrate only on the task at hand. Do not be distracted by the other items that can be completed later.









## Example: Weekly planner

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday





## Example: Monthly planner

**February 2009**

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>





- Calendar
- Work plan for solving problems or dealing with a specific situation



### Example: Work plan for dealing with specific tasks

What	How	Who	When



## Important thought

Calendars, planners and diaries are also available on different computer programmes, but for the purpose of this manual we are only looking at the above examples. If you have Microsoft Outlook on your organisation's computer you can look at the different tools that are available in the programme.



## Individual activity

1. Look at the examples of the different tools that can be used to manage time better.
2. Which of these tools are you using at the moment – make a list.
3. If you are not using any of these tools at the moment, which do you think would assist you to manage your time better?

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## Methods to manage tasks

There are also some methods that can help you to manage your tasks better, such as:

- To-do-lists
- Checklist of activities



### Example: To-do-list

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_





### **Tips for success**

- Take on only what you can handle in the time you have available. If you get overwhelmed with too much work, you might just decide to give up or only get very little done.
- Make sure your goals are realistic. This works two ways, don't make them too difficult or too easy.
- Never lose site of the end product. While completing the individual tasks, remember they are part of a larger project.
- Know what you are looking for. When doing research, avoid wasting time by identifying exactly what you are trying to find.

### **Tips to avoid putting off things till later**

- Don't draw out the planning process; just get it done and start working.
- Complete the task and move on, don't waste time. Go back to it if you have time later.
- If it is not the most exciting task, don't let boredom distract you. An even better reason to get it done. Use self-discipline.
- Putting a task off until the last minute can result in the task being incomplete or of a lesser quality. It can also affect tasks that require the completion of an earlier item. Do not procrastinate.



## Advantages and disadvantages of different methods

The different tools and methods that we can use to help manage our time more effectively have certain advantages and disadvantages. One of the things to keep in mind is that although we can plan our time very carefully there are some unforeseen situations. It is important to then have some tools to deal with the crisis as it happens or to delay certain tasks until later so that you can deal with the unforeseen situation first.



### Group activity

1. What do you think the advantages and disadvantages of each tool or method is. Discuss this in your group.
2. How can you apply each method in your day-to-day work – which of these do you think will be relevant in your organisation.



## Self-test

You should be able to:

- Identify and use basic time management tools
- Describe and use different methods to manage tasks
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the different tools

Please ask your facilitator if you are unsure of any of the above.

## DAY-TO-DAY RECORD KEEPING

### Minutes and agendas

Effective meetings are a very important part of a well functioning organisation. Making sure that you have the right administrative systems in place to support the meetings in your organisation is therefore critical. It is also important to identify the right people that need to attend the different meetings that are held in the organisation. It might not be necessary for all staff and volunteers to be present at all meetings. For some meetings the board members or even donors might be present.

The next step in planning for the meeting is to draw up an agenda.



#### **Definition: Agenda**

An agenda is a “programme” for the meeting and is used to ensure that the purpose and desired outcomes of the meeting are reached. The agenda is a set format that needs to be followed so that the meeting takes place in an orderly manner and all points are covered.

**Date:** .....

**Time Meeting Starts:** .....

**Time Meeting Ends:** .....

**Agenda**

1. Attendance register
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of last meeting
4. Matters Arising
  - 4.1
  - 4.2

5. New Items:

Item	Person presenting	Time allocated

6. General:

Item	Person presenting	Time allocated

7. Date and venue of next meeting
8. Closure





## Definition: Minutes

Minutes are a written record of the proceedings of a meeting and captures the decisions taken and future tasks that need to be carried out, as well as who is responsible.

All meetings should be recorded or minuted. Without minutes there will be no record of what happened at the meeting and this can lead to confusion and conflict. Another problem with not taking minutes is that people will forget what was decided and what they were asked to do and this means that the organisation is likely to go over the same ground again and again without making any progress.

Minutes are also helpful for new members of the organisation to get an update of the history and previous agreements of the organisation.

Therefore the organisation has to ensure that all minutes are kept in a central place and the management, staff and other team members need to know where these documents are kept. Minutes are a public document and as such all members of the organisation should be able to access them. However, if the minutes contain confidential information (e.g. about employees) this version should not be able to be accessed by people other than the board members or management of the organisation.

If your organisation is registered in terms of the NPO Act, the keeping of minutes is a legal requirement.





## Example: Minutes of meeting

For (the purpose of) \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Meeting Starts: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Meeting Ends: \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Attendees:** Attach signed attendance register

2. **Apologies:**

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3. **Minutes of the last meeting:** Distributed and accepted as a true reflection of the meeting

4. **Matters arising:**

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**5. New matters**

<b>Topics according to agenda</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Outcomes achieved</b>
<b>Topic 1</b>		
<b>Topic 2</b>		
<b>Topic 3</b>		

**6. Summary of actions**

<b>Follow-up on topic</b>	<b>What still needs to be done</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>By when</b>



**Date, time and venue of next meeting:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Minutes taken by:**

Minute taker name	Signature	Date

**Signed off by:**

Chairperson name	Signature	Date

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## Other relevant records

There are a number of other records that need to be kept in your organisation:

- Volunteer records – name, contact details and hours worked
- Register of number of clients seen by Home-based care volunteers
- Attendance registers for workshops held - for monitoring and evaluation purposes of project activities and costs
- Correspondence - incoming and outgoing mail (see example)
- Staff records – copy of ID document, drivers' licence, contact information, employment contract
- Record of Board members - copy of ID document, contact information
- Other records may include:
  - Register for telephone calls made
  - Register for photocopies
  - Register of messages taken on phone



### Important thought

All registers (records) are very important as it can help with controlling costs and avoid any misuse of the organisation's resources. Good record keeping (e.g. returning telephone calls or messages) can also prevent misunderstandings, bad communication and affect the overall image of the organisation.



The following checklist will help you look at which records you have in your organisation and which ones you need to keep.

**Checklist for documents and records in organisation**

Documents/ Records	Have them	Need to get them
• Accounting and Financial documents		
• Constitution		
• NPO registration form		
• Funding proposals and agreements with funders		
• List of clients		
• Minutes of meetings: Board meetings		
• Minutes of meetings: Staff meetings		
• Internal policies and procedures		
• Reports		
• Volunteer records		
• Home-based care forms		
• Attendance registers for workshops		
• Incoming Correspondence		
• Outgoing Correspondence		
• Staff records		
• Board members information		





## Example: Volunteer record

Date	Name	Area of contribution	Supervisor	Hours worked







## Self-test

You should be able to:

- Keep accurate minutes that capture the main points of all meetings
- Provide examples of relevant records that need to be kept

Please ask your facilitator if you are unsure of any of the above.

# SETTING UP AND MAINTAINING BASIC FILING SYSTEMS

## A basic filing system

For your organisation to run effectively, it is important to be able to find information when you need it.



### Definition

A filing system stores information and allows you to find the information easily when you need it.

Letters, reports and important documents need to be kept in a place where all staff members can find them if they need them. This is why it is important to have a good filing system.



Before looking at your filing system, use the following steps to help you decide what would work best for you:

- Consider where the best place to keep your information would be e.g. a filing cabinet, a cupboard, the computer, a draw in the desk.
- What system would work best for you to organise your information e.g. alphabetically or different categories.
- How much space do you need for your filing system?

One of the ways to organise your files is to identify different categories that will be useful for you. These categories help to organise information in “groups” and should include all the major activities of your organisation.



## Example of categories for filing

The main categories for a filing system could be:

- Administration
- Legal information
- The Board
- AGM
- Other meetings
- Finances
- Donors / Funders
- Programme information
- Partnership information

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These categories can then be broken down into smaller sub-categories that will allow you to keep your information in an orderly way.

### Administration:

- Staff e.g. appointment letter, contact information, copy of ID document, driver's licence
- Office equipment
- Inventories – stationery and office supplies
- Travel

### Legal information

- Constitution
- Staff contracts



- Job description
- Policies and procedures e.g.
  - Basic conditions of employment
  - Volunteer policy
  - Use of organisations' resources – e.g. vehicle, equipment
  - Transport and travel
  - Disciplinary procedures
  - Grievance procedures
  - Performance appraisal
- List of members of the organisation
- Code of Conduct

### **The Board**

- List of Board members – contact information, copy of ID document
- The chairperson's file
- The secretary's file
- The treasurer's file
- Agendas of Board meetings
- Minutes of Board meetings

### **AGM**

- Agendas
- Minutes of AGM's



### **Other meetings**

- Staff meetings – minutes
- Programme/project meetings – minutes

### **Finances:**

- Budgets
- Financial Plan
- Bank correspondence and statements
- Financial reports (monthly)
- Annual financial reports

### **Donors/ Funders:**

- General information about funders
- Applications and funding proposals
- Fundraising documents
  - Department of Health
  - Department of Social services
  - Other funders

### **Programme information:**

- Strategies and general programme information
- Home-based care project
- Gardening project
- Orphans and vulnerable children



- Newsletter

**Partnership information:**

- Local government
- National government
- Other CBOs or NGOs
- The Network



## Individual activity

Look at the main categories that are given in the example above. Which of these categories would be relevant to your organisation?

Do you think you need to add any categories to this list? If so, make a list of all the categories that you would use in your filing system for your organisation. Include the different sub-categories that go with each main category.

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## How to organise your files

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What type of files do I want to use in my filing system?
- How can I label my files so that it is clear, easy to read and accessible?

Although filing on your computer is also an option we are going to concentrate on the filing of all our documents received. When your organisation is very big you might want to look at filing and storage of information on computer.



### Examples of different files

- Coloured Paper files
- Ring-binder files
- Hanging files for filing cabinets
- Computer filing





## Examples of different methods of labelling

- Different colour labels
- Labels with categories
- Alphabetical labels





## Individual activity

1. Look at all the files that you currently have in your organisation.
2. Divide the files into the different categories that you have chosen.
3. Choose the type of file and labels that you want to use for your filing system.
4. Now label each file according to the right category and sub-category that you have chosen. For example
  - Administration (Red files)
    - Staff file – white label with red letters to mark the file e.g.

**Name of Staff member:**  
**Personal file**
    - Office equipment
    - Inventories – stationery and office supplies

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## Legal requirements for record keeping

The legal requirements in terms of keeping different types of documents vary according to the type of document. For CBOs some of the legal requirements are linked to the NPO Act.

One can broadly classify the different records into the following categories:

- Accounting and Financial documents
- Constitution
- NPO registration forms
- Funding proposals and agreements with funders
- List of clients
- List of Board members
- Staff records – job descriptions and employment contracts
- Minutes of all meetings: Board meetings, staff meetings and other project meetings
- Internal policies and procedures e.g. staff policies
- Correspondence
- Monitoring and evaluation information
- Reports e.g. monthly reports, quarterly reports and annual reports to funders and other stakeholders

Below we will look at the time periods for the different documents. When the legal period for a particular document has ended, it is good to place documents in an archive (we will look at this in more detail in the next section)



Document	Period to be kept
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accounting and Financial documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 years</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constitution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For as long as the organisation exists</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NPO registration form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For as long as the organisation exists</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding proposals and agreements with funders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the duration of funding period and 5 years thereafter (part of Financial records)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of clients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated every year, previous 2 years kept, then filed in the archive</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of Board members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated after each AGM, previous 2 years kept, then filed in the archive</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff records</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the duration of their employment or project</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minutes of meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For 2 year period and then filed in the archive</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal policies and procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For as long as the organisation exists, but updated regularly as the need arises</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correspondence – incoming and outgoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 year period and then filed in the archive</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring and evaluation information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the duration of project and funding, then filed in the archive</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reports: Monthly reports to funders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the duration of funding period and 5 years thereafter</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reports: Quarterly reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 years , then filed in archive</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reports: Annual reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For as long as the organisation exists</li> </ul>

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## Archiving

Most of the documents in an organisation need to be kept longer than the legal requirement, to provide information about the history of the organisation. The problem can be however, that you do not have space at your office to keep all the documents for such a long period. This is when documents are placed in an **archive**.





## Definition: Archive

An archive is a place where documents, older than 5 years are kept indefinitely. An archive works like a library and one can use the archive to find old information about a specific topic or organisation.

Usually the archive is kept according to different years and with different categories. Information and documents are also kept alphabetically so that it is easy to find the information when required. Today many archives have put their information on a database that can be found on a computer and accessed that way. This would ensure easy access to the information – all you would need is the year and the topic!



## Group activity

1. Discuss this new information in your group. Make a list of the documents that you have in your organisation and the time period that each needs to be kept. Use the table below to complete your list.
2. Are there any documents that you think need to go into an archive? Make a list and discuss in the group, where you would set up such an archive.

Document	Yes, we have this type of document in our organisation	Period to be kept
• Accounting and Financial documents		
• Constitution		
• NPO registration form		
• Funding proposals and agreements with funders		
• List of clients		
• List of Board members		
• Staff records		
• Minutes of meetings		
• Internal policies and procedures		
• Correspondence – incoming and outgoing		
• Monitoring and evaluation information		
• Reports: Monthly reports to funders		
• Reports: Quarterly reports		
• Reports: Annual reports		









## Self-test

You should be able to:

- Identify useful categories for a filing system
- Keep ordered and accessible files
- Explain and comply with legal requirements for record keeping
- Archive important and legally required documents
- Identify ways to improve and streamline your filing systems

Please ask your facilitator if you are unsure of any of the above.



## USEFUL WORDS

Administration	The administration of the organisation has to do with all the daily tasks and office functions of the organisation.
Agenda	An agenda is a “programme” for the meeting and is very important to ensure the purpose and desired outcomes are met. The agenda is a set format that needs to be followed so that the meeting takes place in an orderly manner and all points are covered.
Archive	An archive is a place where documents, older than 5 years are kept indefinitely. An archive works like a library and one can use the archive to find old information about a specific topics.
Checklist	A checklist is used as a quick way to ensure that you have done all the tasks that were set out for a specific activity or project.
Daily planner	A daily planner is a sheet that will help you plan all the activities and tasks for that day.
Filing system	A filing system stores information and allows you to find the information again when you need it.
Minutes	Minutes are a written record of the proceedings of a meeting and captures the decisions taken and future tasks that need to be carried out, as well as the responsible person.



Reception	Reception is the first place where people from outside the organisation make contact with your organisation. At reception you welcome and direct visitors and clients to the right person in the organisation
Time management	Good time management is the ability to manage your day in such a way that you are able to achieve all tasks that you have planned for that day, as well as to have a good balance between work, free time, sleep and personal time.
To-do-list	A list of everything you need to do for a specific task or on a specific day.
Weekly planner	A planner for each day of the week that will show what needs to happen each day.
Yearly planner	A planner that looks at all the activities for the whole year.