

**GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
PERSONNEL & A.R.(A) DEPARTMENT**

No.PER.44/2023/322,

Dated Shillong, the 19th December, 2025.

CIRCULAR

Subject: Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on Grant of Permission for Foreign Travel by Government Employees (Private Visits Abroad)

In supersession of all previous instructions issued on the subject and in continuation of Government policy that prior permission is mandatory for Government employees intending to travel abroad in private capacity, the Competent Authority has approved a **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** for delegation of powers and streamlined processing of such cases.

The SOP aims to ensure a **uniform, transparent and time-bound** procedure for granting No Objection Certificate (NOC)/permission while safeguarding administrative, vigilance and security interests. Accordingly:

- (1) Administrative Departments/ Heads of Departments** are hereby delegated the authority to issue NOC/permission for **Non-Gazetted** employees under their jurisdiction, subject to compliance with the prescribed conditions.
- (2) Notwithstanding any delegation of powers provided under this SOP**, all proposals pertaining to foreign travel (official or private) of (i) All India Service (AIS) Officers, (ii) all Gazetted Officers, and (iii) any Government employee posted in a sensitive or vigilance-significant position, shall mandatorily be referred to and decided by the Personnel & A.R. (A) Department. No other authority shall process or approve cases falling under these categories

The detailed SOP is enclosed as Annexure-A, along with the prescribed **Application Form, Model NOC Format, Verification Checklist, and Quarterly Reporting Format** as Annexure-I to Annexure-IV.

All Departments/Heads of Departments/Heads of Offices shall ensure strict adherence to the provisions contained in this Circular and the SOP.

This Circular takes effect from the date of issue.

Enclosures:

Annexure-A : SOP on Grant of Permission for Private Foreign Travel

Annexure-I : Application Form

Annexure-II : Model NOC

Annexure-III : Verification Checklist

Annexure-IV : Quarterly Reporting Format

Sd/-C. V. D. Diengdoh, IAS

Commissioner & Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya
Personnel & A.R.(A) Department

Copy to:

1. The Commissioner & Secretary to the Governor of Meghalaya, Shillong.
2. Private Secretary to the Hon'ble Chief Minister for information of the Hon'ble Chief Minister.
3. Private Secretary to the Chief Secretary, Govt. of Meghalaya, for information of the Chief Secretary.
4. P.A./P.S. to all Ministers.
5. All Principal Secretaries/Commissioner & Secretaries/Secretaries/Additional Secretaries, Govt. of Meghalaya.
6. The Commissioner & Secretary, Meghalaya Legislative Assembly, Shillong.
7. The Resident Commissioner, Meghalaya House, 9-Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Road, New Delhi-110011.
8. The Trade Adviser and Director of Movement, Govt. of Meghalaya, Meghalaya House, Shanty Pally, Kolkata-700042.
9. The Chairman, Meghalaya Public Service Commission, Shillong.
10. All Deputy Commissioners/Sub-Divisional Officers.
11. All Administrative Departments.
12. S.I.O. NIC, Meghalaya, Shillong, for uploading in Government Website.
13. Director, Printing & Stationery, Meghalaya, for favour of publication in the Meghalaya Gazette.
14. Guard File

By Order etc.,



Deputy Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya
Personnel & A. R. (A) Department

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)
Grant of Permission for Foreign Travel by Government Employees (Private Visits Abroad)

1. Preamble and Objective

(1) Foreign travel by Government employees, even on purely private visits, has implications for administrative control, vigilance oversight, and public perception. Therefore, prior permission and a clear, uniform procedure is necessary to balance employees' personal freedoms with institutional integrity and security considerations.

(2) This SOP aims to:

- lay down a transparent and accountable process for grant of permission;
- ensure such travel does not conflict with official duties or public interest;
- clarify roles, responsibilities and provide safeguards against misuse.

(3) This SOP applies to all State Government employees, including those on deputation to Autonomous Bodies, Boards, Corporations, Societies and other Government-funded institutions, unless otherwise exempted.

2. Delegation of Powers

To ensure timely processing of foreign travel proposals while maintaining appropriate levels of administrative scrutiny, the following delegation of powers is prescribed. The authority to examine and grant permission shall be determined based on the status of the Government employee and the nature of the post held, as detailed below:

Sl. No.	Category of Employee	Competent Authority for Grant of Permission
1.	Non-Gazetted Government employees	Administrative Department concerned
2.	State Government Gazetted Officers (other than AIS)	Personnel & A.R. (A) Department
3.	All India Service (AIS) Officers	As per Govt. of India Rules; proposals to be routed through Personnel & A.R. (A) Department
4.	Employees posted in sensitive or vigilance-significant positions (irrespective of rank)	Personnel & A.R. (A) Department

Delegated powers are subject to Government instructions issued from time to time.

3. Definitions

(1) **Private Foreign Visit:** Any foreign visit which is not undertaken on official duty and in which no part of the expenditure is borne by the Central/State Government or any project funded by it. Visits on personal invitation, conferences attended in personal capacity, and visits on own resources are treated as private visits.

(2) **NOC / Prior Permission:** Written permission indicating that the Government has no objection to the employee visiting abroad in private capacity, subject to conditions.

It does not by itself amount to sanction of leave, nor does it create any financial liability on the Government.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Authority/Entity	Responsibilities
Employee	Submit complete and truthful application; declare purpose, funding, and itinerary; obtain leave sanction before travel; comply with post-visit reporting, if any.
Head of Office / Controlling Officer	Check eligibility, verify records (service, vigilance, leave), certify completeness, and forward with recommendation.
Head of Department / Administrative Department	Examine proposals for non-gazetted employees, obtain vigilance/disciplinary status, and issue NOC where admissible.
Personnel & A.R.(A) Department	Process and approve cases of gazetted/sensitive posts and AIS officers (as applicable); issue clarifications; maintain overall monitoring and periodic review.
Vigilance / Disciplinary Authority	Confirm pendency/non-pendency of vigilance or disciplinary proceedings, wherever required.

5. Eligibility Conditions & Negative List

Foreign travel permission is a privilege and not a right. The Competent Authority shall examine each case on merit. Permission **may be denied, deferred, or withdrawn** in the following circumstances:

(1) Pending Disciplinary / Vigilance / Criminal Proceedings

- The employee is **under suspension**, or
- Facing **disciplinary proceedings** involving major penalty, or
- Is **under investigation/prosecution** by vigilance/anti-corruption or law enforcement agencies, or
- A criminal case has been **charge-sheeted** in a court of law.

(2) Public Interest & Security Concerns

- The proposed visit may **prejudice** or interfere with any ongoing inquiry, audit, inspection, court case or Government interest.
- Adverse inputs are received from **security / vigilance authorities** or employer Department.

(3) Conduct and Compliance Requirements

- Non-submission of **Annual Property Returns**, or failure to comply with service conduct rules.
- Habitual **unauthorised absence** or poor record of service affecting suitability.
- Pending **recovery/overpayment** cases or failure to furnish required undertakings.

(4) Submission Timelines

- Proposals must be submitted **minimum 30 days in advance** of proposed travel date to allow mandatory verifications and approvals.
- Delay may lead to **processing refusal**, unless justified in writing and specifically approved by the Competent Authority.

(5) Documentation Inadequacy

- Incomplete proposals, lack of verification certificates, or **non-submission of sponsor/funding details** in case of externally supported visits.

(6) Required Documents

- Application (Annexure-I)
- Undertaking (private visit, no Govt. liability, leave to be obtained)
- Passport copy / details for passport NOC
- Purpose, tentative dates, countries, contact abroad
- Vigilance/disciplinary status verified by Head of Office

(7) Verification and Processing

The following checks shall be carried out before grant of NOC:

- Service status (suspension, pending charges, contemplated proceedings, or serious audit objections).
- Leave position and feasibility of releasing the employee during the proposed period.
- Past record of compliance with foreign travel permissions and leave rules.
- Any input from vigilance / security agencies, if considered necessary in sensitive cases.

The competent authority should aim, as a good practice, to dispose of complete applications within a defined timeline (e.g., 15–21 days) to avoid hardship, provided all documents and clearances are in order

6. Sequence of Approvals

1. Employee submits application with documents to Head of Office.
2. Head of Office verifies and forwards with recommendation and a vigilance/disciplinary status note.
3. Competent Authority (Administrative Department / Personnel & A.R.(A) Department) examines the proposal, seeks clarifications if needed, and records a speaking order (approved / rejected / deferred).
4. On approval, NOC / permission order is issued in the prescribed format with standard conditions and disclaimer.
5. Employee uses NOC to apply for passport/visa, as applicable.
6. After visa is granted, employee submits leave application for the exact period of absence.
7. Only after leave is formally sanctioned may the employee proceed abroad; travel during duty days without leave is not permitted.

Note: NOC for Passport application in respect of both Gazetted and Non-Gazetted employees is to be verified and issued by the concerned Administrative Department.

7. Mandatory Disclaimer in NOC

The NOC / permission order shall invariably contain a prominent disclaimer substantially to the following effect:

"This permission/NOC is issued solely for passport/visa formalities for a private visit abroad. It does not constitute leave sanction or financial assistance by Government. Travel without sanctioned leave shall be treated as unauthorised absence and attract disciplinary action."

8. Monitoring & Reporting

- (1) Administrative Departments shall maintain a register (physical or electronic) of NOCs/permissions issued, capturing essential details (name, designation, country, duration, order number, date).
- (2) A consolidated statement of permissions granted may be furnished periodically (e.g., quarterly/half-yearly) to the Personnel & A.R.(A) Department for oversight and policy review.
- (3) Personnel & A.R.(A) Department may undertake random checks/audits or call for specific files where necessary, particularly in respect of sensitive posts and repeat travellers.

As a good practice, Departments may also require a brief intimation from the employee after return, confirming dates of actual travel and resumption of duty.

9. Misuse, Non-Compliance, and Penalties

Any of the following shall be treated as misconduct:

- Proceeding abroad without prior permission/NOC, or without sanctioned leave for the full period.
- Suppression or misrepresentation of facts (pending cases, funding source, duration, or country of visit).
- Use of the visit for purposes inconsistent with the declared private nature (e.g., unauthorised official dealings).

Such cases will invite action under the **Meghalaya Services (Conduct) Rules, 2019** and the applicable Discipline & Appeal Rules, in addition to any legal action warranted by the facts of the case.

10. Effective Date and Supersession

This SOP shall come into effect from the date of its notification and shall supersede all previous instructions, circulars, and office orders on the subject to the extent they are inconsistent with this SOP, without prejudice to actions already taken under earlier orders.

Sd/- (C. V. D. Diengdoh, IAS)

Commissioner & Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya
Personnel & A.R.(A) Department

Annexure – I
Application Form for Permission to Undertake Private Visit Abroad

To

The _____
(Head of Office / Controlling Officer)
Department/Head of Department: _____

1. Personal Details

a) Name: _____
b) Designation & Present Place of Posting: _____
c) Employee ID / Service Roll No.: _____
d) Mobile No.: _____ Email ID: _____

2. Passport Details

a) Passport No.: _____
b) Date of Issue: _____ Valid up to: _____
 If passport not yet issued — NOC requested for passport application

3. Details of Proposed Private Visit

a) Country (s) to be visited: _____
b) Tentative period of travel: From _____ To _____
c) Purpose of visit: _____
d) Source of financing the trip:
 Own savings
 Financial assistance from private person/entity (provide details): _____
No Government funds or liability to be involved

4. Contact Details Abroad (Mandatory)

Address: _____
Email & Phone No.: _____

5. Vigilance/Legal Status (to be verified)

a) Whether any disciplinary/vigilance/criminal case is pending or contemplated:
 Yes No
If Yes, details: _____

6. Self-Declaration / Undertaking

I hereby declare that:

- My proposed visit is purely private and at no cost to the Government.
- I shall apply for and obtain necessary leave sanction before travelling.
- I shall not undertake any official work without explicit approval.
- The information provided above is true and correct.
- I fully understand that travel without sanctioned leave shall be treated as unauthorised absence and attract disciplinary action.

Date: _____

Signature of Applicant: _____

Recommendation of Head of Office

- Service particulars verified
- Vigilance/disciplinary status enclosed: Yes No

Forwarded with recommendation: Yes / No

Remarks: _____

Name & Signature: _____

Designation: _____

Date: _____ Office Seal

Annexure - II
Model Format of NOC for Private Foreign Travel

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
OFFICE OF THE _____

No. _____

Dated: _____

NO OBJECTION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Shri/Smti/Ku _____, Designation _____, currently posted at _____ under _____ Department, has requested permission to visit abroad in private capacity.

Details of proposed visit:

- Country(s): _____
- Tentative dates: From _____ To _____
- Purpose: _____

The employee has submitted an undertaking that the visit is purely private and at own cost, and that sanctioned leave will be obtained prior to departure.

This NOC is therefore issued solely for the purpose of passport/visa application.

Disclaimer (Mandatory):

"This permission/NOC does not constitute sanction of leave or financial assistance by Government. Sanctioned leave must be obtained separately before departure. Failure to do so shall render the travel as unauthorised absence, inviting disciplinary action under relevant Conduct and Discipline & Appeal Rules."

No Government liability, financial or otherwise, shall arise from this private visit.

Issued with the approval of the Competent Authority.

Place: _____

Date: _____

(Signature)

Name: _____

Designation: _____

(Office Seal)

Annexure – III
Verification Checklist
(To be completed by Head of Department / Administrative Department)

Sl. No.	Verification Item	Yes	No	Remarks
1	Application in prescribed form complete in all respects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Undertaking regarding private visit & leave compliance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Purpose and countries of visit clearly specified	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Contact details abroad provided	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Passport details verified	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	Employee not under suspension	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	No pending major penalty/Vigilance/Criminal case	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8	No Government cost/liability involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	Feasibility of relieving employee considered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	Past compliance with foreign travel rules verified	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Annexure – IV
Quarterly Reporting Format
(To be submitted by Administrative Departments to Personnel & A.R.(A) Dept.)

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Office	Country(s) Visited	Tentative Dates	NOC Order No. & Date	Leave Sanctioned Order No. & Date	Remarks (if any)
1								
2								
...								

Authenticated by:

(Signature) _____

Name: _____

Designation: _____

Date: _____

Office Seal