

CHAPTER 7 - MESS MANAGEMENT

0701. **Introduction.** Unit COs are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the regulations concerning Officers' and Senior Rate/Ranks' Messes are observed, and that a satisfactory standard of messing is maintained. This chapter outlines the division of responsibility within the organisation of the Mess. It also identifies the services that should be expected in Officers' and Senior Rate/Ranks' Messes. It should be read in conjunction with single Service Administration Manuals as well as single Service QRs. An Officers' or Senior Rate/Ranks' Mess is the home of its living-in members and the centre of social life for those living out. As such, it must be run efficiently and a high standard of service maintained. The affairs of an Officers' or Senior Rate/Ranks' Mess are the concern of all Officers or Senior Rate/Ranks' serving on the Unit and they, irrespective of rank, have equal votes regarding its running.

0702. **Officers' Mess Management and Committee Appointments.**

a. **Mess Committee.** Committee Members are elected at a General Mess meeting to manage the affairs of the Mess and normally hold office for a period determined by the Unit CO (normally 6 or 12 months). The Committee as a whole regulates the income and expenditure of the various departments and ensures, save in exceptional circumstances, that each departmental account is self-supporting. It is also responsible for putting into effect the wishes of the Mess as agreed by majority vote at General Mess meetings. An efficient Committee is essential for the good management and general tone of the Mess, for it is by its efforts that the necessary organisation and quality of service will be ensured. In the matter of entertainment the Mess Committee has an important role in organising Mess functions. The Committee is responsible for the accounts of the Mess and in addition the Committee Members are also required to take an active part in the provision of suitable hospitality on behalf of the Mess. The Committee consists of not less than four members including:

- (1) President of the Mess Committee (PMC) or Mess President (MP).
- (2) Mess Secretary.
- (3) Mess Treasurer.
- (4) Bar Manager or Wines Member.
- (5) Messing Member.

0703. **Other Committee Members.** In addition to these positions, larger Messes may have other members with specific responsibilities, such as entertainments members, library member, games room/gaming machines member, Senior Living-in Member (SLIM), gardens member and living-out member.

0704. **President of the Mess Committee/Mess President.** The senior member of the committee, who is to be an Officer on the strength of the Unit, is appointed as PMC/MP by the Unit CO. The PMC/MP is responsible:

- a. To the Unit CO, for the proper management of the Mess and its general discipline, business and accounts, and for the work of the committee and staff.
- b. For ensuring that in ordinary circumstances, no one except himself or a person deputised by him gives orders regarding the management of the Mess.

- c. For exercising a close supervision over all departments of the Mess.
- d. For carrying out surprise percentage checks at intervals to ensure that accounts, stocks and other records, are correctly kept.
- e. For ensuring, by his personal supervision, that all purchases and presents of Mess property are entered in the property book.
- f. For issuing instructions, in writing, to each member of the committee detailing his specific duties and responsibilities. This includes instructions in connection with any special responsibilities and duties required of Committee Members.
- g. For ensuring the bar stock is mustered in accordance with Mess Audit requirements.

0705. **Mess Secretary.** The Mess Secretary runs the administration of the Committee and may be responsible for activities including taking minutes for Mess committee meetings, writing letters on behalf of the Committee and dealing with the post on behalf of the PMC/MP.

0706. **Mess Treasurer.** The Mess Treasurer is responsible to the PMC/MP for the accuracy of all accounts and the safe custody, receipt and disbursement of any monies by him on behalf of the Mess. The Mess Treasurer also ensures that the correct accountancy procedures are in place for the raising of bills and recovery of money due to the Mess. Where there is a Mess member who runs the Unit Accounts/Pay Office on the Unit, it is quite common to appoint him as an ex-officio committee member.

0707. **Wines/Bar Member.** The Wines/Bar Member is elected at a General Mess meeting and may be responsible to the PMC/MP for all matters relating to the running of the bar. Traditionally, this may include managing the running of the bar and cellar, supervising stocktaking of stock and containers and monitoring the welfare of the staff.

0708. **Messing Member.** Where the established Catering Manager is a member of the Mess, he/she is to be appointed as messing member and is to attend Mess Committee meetings as an ex-officio member. He/she is responsible to the Unit CO through the PMC/MP for:

- a. The management of all aspects of food purchasing, storage, accountancy, cooking and service.
- b. The professional efficiency of all Mess staff including their allocation to departments.
- c. The Officers' Mess non-public Messing Account (a subsidiary account of the GMF).

0709. **Living Out Mess Member.** If the Messing Member lives out, his/her deputy should be a living-in Junior Officer, who can represent the views of the living-in members. The Messing Member is to draft terms of reference for that officer for approval and signature by the PMC/MP. At Units where the senior catering officer is of WO rank, he/she may be co-opted to the Mess Committee for advice on specialist catering matters. Alternatively, a non-specialist messing member is to be elected to assume these responsibilities. Where two catering officers are established on the same unit, the senior should be appointed deputy PMC/MP and the junior the messing member.

SENIOR RANKS MESS

0710. **Senior Ranks' Mess Management and Committee Appointments.** Senior Ranks' Mess management is run along very similar lines to an Officers' Mess. However, there are several differences outlined below.

0711. **Officer in Charge of the Mess/Mess Supervising Officer.** The Officer in Charge (OIC)/Mess Supervising Officer (MSO) is responsible to the Unit CO for the supervision, conduct and management of the Mess, its accounts and funds. The OIC/MSO would normally leave the day-to-day running of the Mess to the PMC/CMC/MP.

0712. **President or Chairman of the Mess Committee/Mess President.** The PMC (Mess President in the RN/CMC in the RAF) is appointed by the Unit CO for a period of not less than 6 months and fulfils a role similar to that of the PMC/MP in an Officers' Mess. He is responsible for the management, cleanliness, discipline and general well being of the Mess. He is further responsible for calling Mess Committee meetings, for recording and signing the minutes of the meetings and submitting the minutes, through the officer in charge of the Mess, to the Unit CO for approval. He is responsible for ensuring that members of the Mess Committee are aware of their duties by drawing up written terms of reference and that such duties are carried out in an efficient manner.

0713. **Messing Member.** The senior WO/SNCO chef (Army/RAF) on the unit, ideally should fill the appointment of messing member or is to attend committee meetings as an ex-officio member. If there is no bar member, then the messing member may also have responsibility for supervision and management of the bar.

0714. **The Mess Committee.** A minimum of 3 additional Mess Committee members are elected to the Mess Committee at a General Mess meeting and approved by the unit CO. One of the posts would normally be to act as Treasurer for the Mess. Other duties might include the care and general upkeep of the Mess library and games room, Secretary, Gardens member, or members of the Entertainments Committee. Much depends on the enthusiasm and enterprise of the committee in the discharge of their duties. Committee meetings should be held frequently (best practice would be at least monthly) in order to exercise satisfactory control and to implement the wishes of Mess members as agreed by the majority at general Mess meetings. Other members can be co-opted on to the Mess if the committee wishes.

0715. **Senior Member.** The senior member of the Mess, as the title indicates, is the senior WO on the posted strength of the unit. He is also responsible at all times for the general decorum and tone of the Mess and the conduct of its members.

0716. **Catering Manager.** Whilst not on the committee, the Catering Manager is responsible to the Unit CO for:

- a. The provision of varied, adequate, well-cooked and attractively presented food, taking into account the stated preferences of Mess members.
- b. The professional efficiency of all Mess staff including their allocation to departments.
- c. Ensuring that a daily running record is kept of casual meal (and extra Messing where appropriate) income and expenditure.

It is important that the Catering Manager maintains satisfactory control of catering staff through the Mess Manager and the messing member. Regular visits to check on the workings of the Mess are essential to achieve this.

0717. **Mess Meetings.** Mess Committees routinely meet at least once per month to discuss the routine business of the Mess. Mess meetings, attended by all members of the Mess not on essential duty, are called to discuss important matters which require early debate. Categories of Mess meetings are:

- a. **General Mess Meeting.** A General Mess meeting is held once during each accounting period (normally 6 or 12 months). Notification of such a meeting is posted on the Mess notice-board, together with a copy of the balance sheet bearing the certificate of the audit board. Any member who wishes to bring a proposition before the meeting may submit it, in writing, to the Mess President at least 5 days before the notified date of meeting.
- b. **Extraordinary General Mess Meeting.** An extraordinary General Mess meeting (EGM) to discuss important matters may be called either by the Unit CO or by the Mess President.

0718. **Suggestions and Complaints.** Suggestions regarding the management of the Mess may be made, in writing, in a suggestions book provided in the Mess for that purpose. Entries must be signed and dated. The Mess President, or respective committee member on the authority of the Mess President, is to reply promptly in the suggestions book. Suggestions or complaints regarding the Mess staff, should be addressed, in writing, to the Mess President and not entered in the suggestions book.

0719. **Food Complaints.** Standing Orders should provide for a complaint to be represented first to the watch/shift leader in the kitchen/galley. The whole dish or plate of food complained about is to be returned. The shift leader should investigate the complaint, make an immediate issue to remedy any reasonable complaint and report subsequently to the Mess Manager/Catering Manager. A complaint that cannot be dealt with satisfactorily at once should be brought to the attention of the Mess Manager/Catering Manager or his deputy.

0720. **Mess Organisation.** Officers' and Senior Rate/Ranks' Messes are run along similar lines, with the Mess Manager and his staff answering to both the Mess Committee and the Unit Catering Manager. With the general exception of Service supplied fixtures, fittings and staff, both the Officers' and Senior Rate/Ranks' Messes are financed by their members. The accounting within Messes is to accord to single Service non-public accounting manuals which themselves are based on single Service QRs.

0721. **Mess Manager.** The Mess Manager is responsible to the PMC/CMC/MP for the day-to-day management of the Mess. Overall executive control is in the hands of the Mess Manager, but this in no way absolves committee members from carrying out their proper duties. It is important that all executive instructions to the staff should be issued by the Mess Manager so that he may be at all times aware of, and in control of, the workings of the Mess. Only by following this principle will a Mess Manager be able to carry out his duties systematically and efficiently. The Mess Manager should have regular contact with members of the Mess Committee, and, to enable him to understand and carry out the wishes of the committee, he must attend Mess Committee meetings. Whereas in many respects the Officers' or Senior Rate/Ranks' Mess is autonomous, all the staff are part of the catering section. Therefore, in addition to their responsibilities to the PMC/CMC/MP, Mess Managers have a responsibility to the Catering Manager, who is the professional head of the catering service on the Unit, for the standards of hygiene, cleanliness and service provided in the

Mess. He is further responsible for the discipline, 'on the job' training, welfare and general management of all Service and civilian staff.

0722. **Mess Departments.** The organisation of an Officers' or Senior Rate/Ranks' Mess is broken down into departmental cells for supervision at the various levels of management. Depending on the size of the Mess there may be some or all of the following positions:

- a. Deputy Mess Manager (Mess Steward).
- b. Steward IC Dining Room.
- c. Steward IC Bar.
- d. Steward IC Reception.
- e. Steward IC Accommodation.
- f. Steward IC Mess Gear (RN).
- g. Senior Chef.

0723. **Delegation of Responsibilities.** The Mess Manager is responsible to the Mess Committee for every detail of the operation of the Mess and is to receive from him detailed terms of reference. One person, however, cannot be expected to oversee the detailed working of every department of the Mess. The Mess Manager, must, therefore, transfer to his/her immediate subordinates, the Mess steward and senior chef, authority to operate and control various aspects of the organisation; similarly, they are, to allocate specific and detailed responsibilities to those under them. It must be remembered and clearly understood, that at no stage does delegation mean the surrender of ultimate responsibility.

0724. **Mess Supervision.** All heads of departments have responsibilities for supervision, i.e. the Mess Steward, Senior Chef and Mess Manager. It is important that no activity of the Mess is overlooked and adequate control is to be maintained by a combination of the following three principles:

a. **Regular Routine Meetings.** It is advisable for the Mess Manager to hold regular routine meetings. The benefits obtained from holding these meetings will be considerable, as communication will be improved, staff involvement will be more complete, and the Mess will function with increased efficiency; they should be kept short and to the point. Suggested topic headings are as follows:

- (1) Shortcomings can be discussed and remedial or preventative action agreed.
- (2) Forthcoming events can be notified, planning initiated and progress monitored.
- (3) Specific tasks can be allocated.
- (4) Changes in Mess policy can be explained.
- (5) Any other business can be discussed.

b. **Routine Checks.** It is desirable to organise a system of routine checks at various levels. These are by no means exhaustive, and must be varied according to

the known weaknesses of the Mess, allied to the programme of business. These formal checks in no way preclude management (at all levels) from making informal checks at any time.

c. **Supervision.** Good supervision is essential to the maintenance of high standards and morale. Supervisors must, therefore, be constantly about the Mess, encouraging the staff and giving guidance whenever and wherever it is required. It follows that detailed terms of reference are to be produced for all staff and that those responsible for supervision must thoroughly understand every aspect of the work in the departments under their control.

0725. **Accommodation and Cleaning Services.** The Domestic Support role in Messes may vary from unit to unit. Large HQ Messes usually provide a full range of amenities and services which makes the function of domestic support more complex than that of small unit Messes. A successful domestic support system can only be established if management makes a full appreciation of the commitment and takes into account the following factors:

- a. The extent of the task.
- b. The standard to be achieved.
- c. The number of staff required to do the task.
- d. The grades of staff available or required to do the task.
- e. The quality of the staff.
- f. The equipment required.
- g. The range of cleaning agents required.
- h. The approach to the task.
- i. Any specialist cleaning required (e.g. listed buildings).

0726. **Cleaning and Maintenance.** Cleaning and Maintenance represents the largest single activity of domestic support. If the domestic support function of a Mess is contracted out, the contract statement of requirement (SOR) will specify in detail what is required of the contractor. The requirement set within the contract SOR will also reflect that which is required from DEL and/or Military domestic support staff. Trolleys or boxes containing a complete range of the appropriate cleaning equipment and products should be supplied to enable staff to carry out their tasks properly. In general terms, the areas that must be cleaned and maintained are as follows:

- a. Public areas of the Mess including lounges, dining rooms, ante rooms, games rooms and reception areas.
- b. Bars and cellars.
- c. Bedrooms and suites.
- d. Corridors and stairways.
- e. Furnishings and fittings.
- f. Mess silver.

Maintenance also includes the supervision and control of linen (bedroom and dining room), cleaning equipment and materials.

0727. Bedrooms and Suites – Daily Clean. In a Senior Rate/Ranks' Mess, unless dictated otherwise in contractual arrangements, routine bedroom cleaning is the responsibility of the occupant. Officers' Messes are scaled for staff to carry out a standard daily clean involving the following:

- a. Beds to be made up and linen changed weekly. Service issue bedding is cleaned at public expense.
- b. Carpeted floors to be vacuum cleaned and stains removed where necessary. Vinyl or similar material floor coverings to be polished.
- c. Surfaces to be dusted.
- d. Toilet bowls and wash basins must be cleaned.
- e. Waste paper buckets must be emptied.

0728. Bedrooms and Suites – Deep Clean. Other than for rooms used for short stays, in both Officers' and Senior Rate/Ranks' Messes, all rooms must be deep cleaned at change of occupancy and must include the following in addition to the daily clean:

- a. Windows and curtains.
- b. Mirrors.
- c. Paintwork including skirting boards.
- d. Furniture, including wardrobes, chests and dressing tables.
- e. Bed frames and mattresses.
- f. Lamps and lampshades.

0729. Batting/Valeting Service. A Batting/Valeting Service is provided in Officers' Messes and is extended to all 'Living-in' Officers and those Officers (OF5 and above) who may be attending courses. This service is not extended to overnight visitors or Duty Officers. Exceptions to this rule would be VIP Visitors. The standard required must be high and to the satisfaction of the individual officer concerned. The service normally provided is as follows:

- a. **Working Dress.** An Officer is entitled to have one set of working dress ironed and one pair of working shoes cleaned each day, Mon-Fri. Working Dress is defined as normal working dress and may include skirts, lightweights or barrack dress trousers and shirt, or regimental equivalents. Working footwear is defined as shoes or boots. Training shoes are not classed as working footwear.
- b. **Early Morning Room Service.** An early morning call and tea service may be provided, normally between the hours of 0700-0730 (Mon-Fri) and should be extended to Overnight Visitors, Duty Officers and Course Personnel. As an alternative, a kettle, together with the makings of tea and coffee, can be provided in each room together with an alarm clock.

0730. **Customer Charter/Service Routines.** It is important that the Mess member knows what accommodation service he can expect. Best practice would be to publish a Customer Charter/Service Routines that can be displayed on the wall or back of the door. This customer charter explains what routines are applied in accommodation. It may include details of the daily cleaning routine, the weekly cleaning routine, bathing services and other services such as laundry or dry cleaning. It may be enshrined in Mess Rules which also should be available in every accommodation room of the Mess.

0731. **Allocation of Accommodation.** Once notified of a new arrival, accommodation staff are to prepare for the person, bearing in mind the rank of the person and the duration/reason for the stay. For example, a new arrival to the unit may be allocated different accommodation to someone detached in for a few days; similarly, a senior officer may be offered a suite whereas a junior officer may be treated differently. The following should also be noted:

- a. Always prepare a bed space according to the status of the individual.
- b. Check the room for defects and keys are available.
- c. Ensure the room is clean with particular attention being paid to the inside of wardrobes, linen bins, sinks etc.
- d. Enter the name of the person joining on the accommodation board.

0732. **Joining Information.** When someone joins an establishment, it is important that they are made to feel welcome. As well as being shown to their room, it is of great benefit if the new arrival can be told important aspects such as what services they can expect, times of meals, dress codes etc. Wherever possible, Messes should produce a written brief identifying all the basic information that may be of use, which can be passed on together with room keys to a new arrival, or alternatively, can be placed in each room prior to arrival.

0733. **Reception Services.** The duties of a receptionist (referred to as a hall porter in the Royal Navy) call for initiative, tact, politeness and adaptability. It is essential for the receptionist to know how to contact all Mess members serving in the unit during working hours. The receptionist should also be acquainted with the Mess social calendar. Stewards may be required to perform receptionist duties from time to time and in order to ensure that prescribed standards are not compromised; they must be made conversant with what those standards entail.

0734. **Enquiries.** When dealing with enquiries, the receptionist must be courteous and discreet. If the enquiry is of a general nature it should be dealt with at the time, but where such an enquiry refers to Mess affairs it should be passed to the Mess Manager or Mess steward. An enquiry relating to service matters should be referred to the Mess Manager, Mess secretary or duty officer.

0735. **Mail.** Mail should be dealt with as follows:

- a. **Ordinary Letter Mail.** Letters addressed to Mess members should be placed in the appropriate pigeon hole of the letter rack under the initial letter of the members surname. A book should be kept that lists all forwarding addresses for members so that any post arriving after a member has left, can be forwarded on.

b. **Registered and Parcel Mail.** All registered and parcel mail for Mess members must be retained in the postal section, and addressees informed by notification slips. All such mail should be collected and signed for by the addressee.

c. **Mess Business Mail.** All mail addressed to the Mess, i.e. for the Mess Secretary, Mess Manager, or Mess Steward, should be passed directly to the Mess Manager.

0736. **Newspapers and Periodicals.** On receipt of the daily newspapers and periodicals, the receptionist should stamp each one with the Mess stamp before passing them into the Mess. Newspapers or periodicals ordered by individual Mess members will not be stamped but should be dealt with in accordance with local arrangements.

0737. **Mess Books.** The following Mess Books should be maintained at reception:

a. **Warning-in/Joining Book.** Mess members living in the Mess returning from leave or detachment or new Mess members posted in to the unit should, on arrival, sign the Warning-in/Joining Book for which the receptionist is responsible.

b. **Warning-out/Leaving Book.** The Warning-out/Leaving Book is maintained to ensure that any Mess member living-in who is proceeding on leave or detachment will not be charged for messing during his/her absence. It also enables a correct ration strength return to be maintained. Members proceeding on leave or detachment should inform the Mess secretary or Mess Manager. On the day of departure, the receptionist should ensure that the Warning-out/Leaving book is actioned for dates of absence and signature.

c. **Visitors Book.** The Visitors Book is maintained to record the names of visitors to the Mess. The receptionist should invite visitors to sign the book and/or leave their card.

0738. **Local Information.** For the benefit of all Mess members, the receptionist should maintain a book containing current information on a wide range of subjects.

a. Telephone numbers of all repair garages and taxi services in the area, with particulars of firms operating all-night services.

b. Local entertainment's guide, listing times of commencement of particular performances. The guide should also include any other items of local interest including bars, restaurants and visitor attractions.

c. Timetables of all local and mainline train services together with the times of any local bus services.

0739. **Bar Services.** Traditionally, the Officers' and Senior Rate/Ranks' Mess bars have been the rallying point for Officers and Senior Rate/Ranks since Messes came into existence. It is therefore expected that the service received from the bar should be of the highest standard to meet the conditions of service of the members. The bar opening times should be displayed in the Reception Information Sheet and also in Mess Rules. Additionally, food may be served in the bar if desired by the Mess Committee.

0740. **Junior Rates'/Ranks' Mess (JRM).** The CO of a Unit is ultimately responsible for the standard of catering. He should pay particular attention to catering arrangements in the Junior Rate/Ranks' Mess and impress upon his subordinates the importance of the effect which well-cooked and well-presented food has upon the efficiency, contentment and well-

being of the troops. The CO should visit the Junior Rate/Ranks' Mess frequently and satisfy himself that a high standard of catering is being maintained.

0741. **Catering Manager.** The Catering Manager is responsible for providing varied, adequate, well-cooked and well-served food. He is also responsible for the maintenance of a high standard of cleanliness in dining rooms, kitchens/galleys and their surrounds, and ancillary departments. He is to pay special attention to food served to personnel working on watches/shifts which entail the serving of meals at other than normal times.

0742. **Senior Chef IC Junior Rate/Ranks' Mess.** The Senior Chef in charge of running the Junior Rate/Ranks' Mess is responsible to the Catering Manager for the efficient running of that Mess.

0743. **Junior Ranks' Messing Committee (RAF ONLY).** A representative committee is to be formed under the presidency of a senior officer appointed by the CO. The committee is to consist of the President (PJRM), the Catering Manager, Senior Chef IC Mess and representative from other sections of the unit as decided by the CO.

0744. **Responsibilities (RAF ONLY).** It is the duty of the PJRM to ensure that the committee attain and preserve a constructive attitude of mind and a responsible outlook towards their task. It should be made clear to the representatives that they have been elected to voice the opinions of the various sections of the unit and must not adopt a minority outlook.

0745. **Representatives (RAF ONLY).** The duties of the Junior Ranks' Messing Committee are important, since the minutes of these meetings provide in part a record whereby the CO can ascertain whether a satisfactory standard of messing is maintained. Representatives of all sections of the unit are entitled to make recommendations for improvement in any aspect of the catering service or to state complaints and have them fully discussed. Therefore, care should be taken to ensure that responsible personnel only are chosen as representatives.

0746. **Meetings.** Single Service QRs detail the frequency of JRM meetings. Routinely, they should be held monthly, but they are not to be held less frequently than once per quarter. Their purpose is to:

- a. Consider the minutes of the previous meeting and the CO's remarks.
- b. Ascertain and record whether or not a satisfactory standard of messing is being maintained.
- c. Receive and discuss any suggestions for the improvement of messing standards.
- d. Receive and investigate complaints of substance. The Mess management should deal with trivial isolated complaints as they occur.
- e. Discuss future menu planning and catering systems.

0747. **Messing Suggestions Book.** When meetings are held less frequently than once a month, a messing suggestions book is to be maintained in each Junior Ranks' Mess. It is to be used to record not only junior ranks' suggestions, but also the action taken or proposed by the Catering Manager. All entries are to be actioned promptly. Junior Ranks are to have access to this book at all times.

0748. **Complaints.** Standing Orders should provide for a complaint to be represented first to the shift leader in the kitchen. The whole dish or plate of food complained about is to be returned. The shift leader should investigate the complaint, make an immediate issue to remedy any reasonable complaint and report subsequently to the Mess Manager/Catering Manager. A complaint that cannot be dealt with satisfactorily at once should be brought to the attention of the Mess Manager/Catering Manager or his deputy.

0749. **Minute Book.** A minute book is to be used to record proceedings of messing committee meetings. This book is to be submitted to the CO for comment after each committee meeting. The minutes of the meeting are to be set out using standard Service writing conventions and are to be widely distributed on the Unit.

0750. **Food Service.** The service of food in Junior Rate/Ranks' Messes is usually based upon a cafeteria servery or serveries, located in a dining room of sufficient size to accommodate the anticipated feeding strength. Enhancements to the fixtures and fittings of the public rooms, funded from non-public funds, can improve the general ambience of a Mess. Information boards and signs should be bold, current, concise and relevant. A menu must always be displayed.

0751. **Coffee Lounges.** Coffee lounges may be provided where there is sufficient space remaining in the dining room after the necessary number of dining seats has been provided. There is no scaled building or equipment entitlement for coffee lounges. Provision of a coffee lounge area can be useful in persuading customers to vacate tables as soon as they have eaten their meal. Experience suggests, however, that the facility will only be used if it offers an alternative environment, good and reliable facilities and is located between the dining area and the exit.

0752. **Clearance of Dining Rooms.** Establishment scales include staff for clearing of dining room tables and this service should be provided. Equipment is also provided on scale for a trolley clearance service and the seating provision should be adequate to allow a few minutes between seat occupancy for dirty dishes to be removed and the table to be cleaned. Staff should be given training in the system to be employed for table clearance. Points to cover include:

- a. Dirty dishes should be removed as soon as possible.
- b. Sort and correctly stack dirty dishes on the trolley.
- c. Keep trolley free from spillage.
- d. Check that condiments and other table appointments are clean and adequately charged during the service.
- e. Wiping down of tables should normally be left until a table has been vacated by all diners and clean cloths must always be used.
- f. Check that the chair seats are clean.
- g. Watch out for any abnormal plate waste and advise the watch/shift IC if any particular item of food is consistently being left unconsumed.

0753. **Charges for Meals in Officers' Messes.** This should be read in conjunction with JSP 456 Vol 2 Chap 9 'Non-Public Messing'. Traditionally, Officers' Messes and some Senior Rate/Rank' Messes provide additional items to the 3 meals of the day. Examples of these extra items might include afternoon tea, a cheese board with dinner, a sweet at lunch,

extra items at breakfast, coffee and tea on tap etc. The finance generated to support these extra items is recovered non-publicly direct from the Officer in one of the following ways:

- a. **Daily Levy.** The daily levy is the traditional method and involves a daily Extra Messing Charge (EMC) levied against living-in members with a proportion charged per meal to non-living-in diners. It is a well-tested and proven system, but takes no account of a living in member's attendance at meals.
- b. **Meal Levy.** The spreading of an extra messing charge (EMC) over each meal is similar to the daily levy but members only get billed for the meals they take. Whilst in many ways fairer than the daily levy, this system requires particular attention by mess supervisors.
- c. **CRL.** Refer to JSP 456 Vol 4.
- d. **Partial PAYD (RAF ONLY).** This system is usually based on one meal of the day counting as the EMC. The extra messing charged meal, which is usually lunch, has a costed menu with a charge against each dish. Often the PAYD lunch meal is a snack or light lunch served in the bar/or in the dining room, with diners paying for what they order. This has the advantages of providing snacks for visitors only staying for lunch from within the day duty visitor entitlement and does not affect overnight visitors who do not stay for lunch. It does assume that living-in members will normally take dinner as their main meal, if lunch is the 'paid for' meal.

0754. **Variations.** There is considerable variation in the method of providing and charging for meals between units. The aim should be to suit the majority of members using the mess within its administrative resources. Certain messes, because of role or geographical location, may wish to modify the systems identified below to best suit mess members. What is essential, before instituting any meal service system, is to ensure that the mess's resources can meet the task and that the mess membership supports the system being used.

0755. **Control Systems.** There is a need for a control system in the dining room. This can be achieved by using a manuscript book record of members' attendance at meals, a cardex system, swipe cards etc. Whichever system is adopted, it should be approved by the Mess Membership.

0756. **Extra Messing Charge (EMC).** A daily EMC can be levied. The PMC/MP and membership of the mess are to decide the amount of the levy and which method is to be used for collecting it. Under this system, the EMC is calculated as a percentage of the DMR. This provides an easy reference for members, which should require little explanation. The EMC should be agreed by mess committee and can be levied as a daily charge or apportioned. EMC is normally apportioned on the basis of breakfast 15%, main meal 50%, and third meal 35%. It is recommended that the EMC charge does not exceed 75% of the DMR (in RN Messes this is defined within QRs and is not to exceed 75%).

0757. **Bar Snacks.** Where bar snacks are provided in addition to Dining Room provision of lunch, they are normally treated separately. Living-out members should pay the total cost of the snack provided but not be charged extra messing. When the cost of the bar snack exceeds the public entitlement for the meal, living-in Officers or visitors should be charged the additional sum, as an extra messing charge. Should the DMR entitlement for a liver-in or day duty visitor taking a snack or main meal exceed expenditure on that meal, in no circumstances is the balance to be credited or paid to that individual.

0758. **Charges and Costs of Meals.** If menus are to be costed, the Messing Member/Caterer should assess charges for meals and snacks carefully. Situations where this might be required include the lunch meal under a partial pay as you dine system or bar snacks. Costings for dishes must include adequate allowance for production and incidental items, e.g., meat should be costed at its raw, untrimmed weight plus the cost of fat/oil, seasoning and other items used in preparation and cooking. Charges are not to exceed the food cost nor are they to be boosted artificially to give advantage to other mess members.

0759. **VAT.** Messes in the UK are to be charged value added tax on:

- a. The EMC levy.
- b. Casual meals and the appropriate portion of the EMC, if one is levied.
- c. Individually-priced dishes.
- d. Functions.

0760. **Flight Line Feeders.** The intensity of modern flying operations and the dispersed nature of the flying organisation on units with hardened aircraft shelters (HAS), mean that air and ground crew are often unable to return to their Messes at normal meal times. Such a situation can constitute a flight safety hazard, and to avoid this catering has to be decentralised. Flight Line Feeders are provided at airfields with HAS complexes, and at other fast jet and training units, where the need for decentralised catering can be proved. Flight Line Feeders are not hardened, even when provided on hardened airfields. Catering personnel under the direction of the Catering Manager operate them. The facility is available for use by all ranks and is intended mainly to provide a midday meal, although local arrangements may require its use for night flying. Where it is proposed to provide a flight line feeder in an existing building, Air Command, RAF A4 Cat Ops is to be consulted.

0761. **Supervision and Responsibility.** The Catering Manager is responsible for the effective control and efficient messing accounting of the airfield buffet. The successful operation of an airfield buffet is dependent upon adequate and appropriate supervisory and operating staff. Separate manpower is usually established for public-funded buffets.

0762. **Menus.** The prime purpose of an airfield buffet is to provide mid-shift meals to personnel working remote from their main Mess. However, as in all small Messes, the facilities and income available control the range of menu choice. Nevertheless, the system is based on call order equipment with an element of cook/chill, and the capability to produce some freshly prepared vegetables and other items. Thus, with good planning and management, the Catering Manager has some flexibility to provide some dishes that are available in Messes, together with a range of fast food items.

0763. **Accounting Systems.** The accounting system will depend on the type of Flight Line Feeder. The following methods of operation are currently in use:

- a. Existing established Flight Line Feeders using flight-feeding entitlements to provide meals on the ground for living-in and living-out aircrew (e.g. SAR).
- b. Feeders provided from unit resources, for all ranks where living-out personnel pay for meals and living-in personnel have the value of their meal entitlement transferred from their parent Mess. Flight feeding entitlements are then issued to the Sqns.

0764. **Income.** Established outlets already have public income and expenditure accounts. All buffets provided from unit resources are to be parented by the Officers' Mess and accounted for through its messing income and expenditure account. The income will be derived from:

- a. Living-out personnel who are to pay cash for the dishes taken, which is to be credited to the extra messing income account. Advice of the income is to be recorded locally.
- b. Living-in officers taking a meal in substitution for an equivalent meal in the Mess will require no accounting action but a record of meals taken should be maintained. However, if the Mess does not levy an extra messing charge and the lunch meal is provided under a partial PAYD system they are to pay as for living-out personnel as above.
- c. Living-in SNCOs and JRs taking a meal in an all ranks buffet will require no accounting action but a record of meals taken should be maintained. The DMR value of the meal taken is to be claimed from the respective Messes using the proforma as an abatement certificate to debit/credit the respective income and expenditure accounts.

0765. **Duty Day Visitors.** Eligibility is contained in JSP 456 Vol 2 Chap 5.

0766. **Residence Catering.** Some catering personnel are employed in established posts in Senior Officers' Residences to provide domestic support in the residence. Senior Officers frequently have to accommodate and entertain VIP guests. This commitment demands that only the highest standards of domestic service prevail and places heavy demands on the specialist skills of all the staff in the residence. The principal areas of responsibility are:

- a. Valeting and management of accommodation.
- b. Managing the service of food and beverages for the routine day to day commitment and when the presence of guests requires special arrangements to be made.
- c. Care and maintenance of equipment.

0767. **Staff Tasking.** These tasks are the province of Mess Managers, stewards and chefs who are responsible, through the senior member of staff, to the Officer in residence. However, the direction of the staff and allocation of tasks often falls to the Officer's wife. The number of staff established in a residence is usually small, and it is therefore impracticable for the staff to work purely within the strict confines of their specialisation, as happens in Messes. Instead, there is invariably an overlap of duties. For the residence to run smoothly, the staff must work together as a team and each member must be flexible and adaptable in his approach to work.

0768. **Staff Duties.** Many of the duties in residences demand that the staff must develop and acquire techniques and knowledge that are not performed regularly in Messes. For example, the visits of guests from other Services and other nations will necessitate the staff knowing and using the correct forms of address and will also involve the steward in caring for a wide variety of dress and uniform, decorations and medals. Similarly, Logistic Chefs will be expected to plan and produce well-balanced, economical menus for the routine needs of the Officer in residence and must also be capable of producing particularly high-quality meals for formal occasions, perhaps observing special dietary needs for foreign guests.

0769. **Staff Selection.** Selection is based on information contained in annual performance appraisals, but Catering Managers can assist in the selection process by identifying at an early stage all Logistic Chefs and Logistic Caterers who show potential for VIP employment. The final assessment of suitability will take into account such factors as creativity, flair, flexibility, improvisation, adaptability, anticipation and initiative.

0770. **Staff Training.** There are no formal training courses available to teach residence staff the skills and knowledge that they will need. Much will be learned and acquired by on-the-job training, but each person posted to a residence will receive a self-learning package (SLP) appropriate to his trade as soon as he is selected. This SLP provides information on the organisation of a residence, describes and provides instruction about particular specialist skills that are likely to be encountered, and lists references where more detailed information may be found if required. Any person appointed to work in a residence should get in touch with their single Service catering school for detailed guidance.

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