PUBLIC RECORDS

1956 No. 980

The Public Use of the Records Rules, 1956

Made - - - -	*27th June*, 1956
Laid before Parliament	*29th June*, 1956
Coming into Operation	*1st July*, 1956

The Master of the Rolls, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by Section 9 of the Public Record Office Act, 1838(**a**), hereby makes the following Rules:—

Hours and conditions of attendance

1. Search Rooms shall be open to persons desiring to inspect records or documents on every day, except Sunday, Good Friday, Saturday before Easter, Easter Monday, Saturday before Whit Sunday, Whit Monday, August Bank Holiday, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and any other days which may be appointed for public or privilege Holidays.

The hours of admission and attendance shall be, for literary searches from 9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m., except on Saturdays, when they shall be from 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.; and, for searches subject to the payment of fees, from 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. on Mondays to Fridays only.

2. All persons making use of the Search Rooms for the purpose of consulting the records or the indexes thereto shall write their names and full addresses, daily, in the Attendance Book kept for the purpose.

3. No umbrellas or sticks shall be taken into any Search Room.

Records open to inspection

4. Records in the statutory custody of the Master of the Rolls, records of the Duchy of Lancaster, and records of the late State Paper Office, shall be open to public inspection subject to the conditions mentioned below and to the payment of the fees specified in the schedule hereto.

5. Any person wishing to inspect such records of an earlier date than the year 1843 free of charge shall make a written application for a Student's Ticket to the Secretary of the Public Record Office on the form provided for that purpose: a person of alien status shall, in addition, ask his Embassy or Legation to apply to the Foreign Office for a letter of introduction on his behalf.

6. Records of departments of state deposited in the Public Record Office shall be open to inspection, by persons holding Student's Tickets, down to the years specified by the heads of such departments.

7. Records deposited in the Public Record Office by departments of state, but not opened to public inspection, shall only be produced subject to such conditions as the heads of the respective departments shall from time to time prescribe.

(**a**) 1 & 2 Vict. c. 94.

8. A General Catalogue of Lists, Indexes, Calendars, etc., intended for the use of the public is kept in the Search Rooms: Lists, Indexes, etc., not mentioned in this catalogue shall not be produced without permission of the officer in charge of the Search Rooms.

9. Records not mentioned in the Search Room Lists, and Records in course of arrangement, shall not be produced without permission of the officer in charge of the Search Rooms.

10. Documents which are of exceptional value, or are unwieldy, unstamped or fragile, shall be examined under such conditions as the officer in charge of the room shall, in the particular case, think requisite for their safety: no person shall be entitled to examine documents which have been labelled "Unfit for Production."

Issue and return of records

11. A separate ticket shall be clearly written and signed by every person desiring to inspect any document for each document required; and this ticket shall be given by such person to the officer in charge of the room before any document is produced to the applicant.

12. No person shall have more than three documents inclusive out at one time except by special permission of the officer in charge of the room.

13. Immediately after the conclusion of a search documents shall be returned by the person to whom they have been produced to the officer in charge of the room, or to one of the attendants, in exchange for the tickets referring to them; and all such persons shall be held responsible for the documents issued to them so long as their tickets shall remain with an official of the Public Record Office.

14. Persons wishing to retain documents for use after the first day of production shall fill in and sign the portion of the ticket of application which is marked "Kept Out" before leaving on that day; and shall apply for each document, when it is next required, on the ticket specially provided for the purpose.

Handling and treatment of records

15. The introduction of bags or parcels into the Search Rooms is not normally forbidden; but they shall not be placed upon the tables.

16. No person shall lean upon, crumple or touch with a pencil point or wetted finger any documents or books belonging to the Public Record Office, or place upon them the paper on which he or she is writing; and documents made up in volumes or files shall, whenever possible, be placed upon the rests provided for the purpose.

17. No person other than an officer of the Public Record Office shall make any mark upon, or any alteration in the writing of, any document or book belonging to that Office.

18. Ink shall not be used.

19. Tracings of documents shall not be made by any person without specific permission from the officer in charge of the room.

20. Documents, books, or other articles belonging to the Public Record Office shall not be removed from one room to another without the specific permission of the officer in charge of the room; nor by any person other than an official.

21. Works of reference taken from the open shelves of the Search Rooms shall be returned to their correct places immediately after use.

Photography

22. Reproduction of documents by a number of photographic processes is undertaken officially by the department; and detailed information with regard to this service is given in a separate leaflet, which may be obtained in the Search Rooms or by postal application to the Secretary. As the studio accommodation at the disposal of the department is very limited, outside photographers can only in exceptional circumstances, and on special conditions, be permitted to work in the Office.

23. Photographs of Public Records shall not be reproduced by any photographic process except by permission of the department. Applicants for such permission shall specify the context in which the reproduction will appear; and the permission shall be understood to extend only to reproduction in that context.

General rules

24. Silence shall be maintained in the Search Rooms and adjacent passages so far as possible.

25. All suggestions or complaints in regard to the administration of the Search Rooms shall be made in the first instance to the officer in charge of the room concerned.

26. The officer in charge of any Search Room shall be empowered to exclude persons from the Public Record Office for any of the following reasons: wilful breach of any of the foregoing rules and regulations; persistent disregard of the officer's authority; damage of any sort to any document or article belonging to the Public Record Office; and conduct, language, habits, unseemly dress, or any other matters offensive, or reasonably likely to be offensive, to others using the Public Record Office: provided always that the exclusion of any person shall be forthwith notified in writing, with the cause thereof, to the Deputy Keeper; who shall enquire into the circumstances, and whose order, unless reversed by the Master of the Rolls, shall be final.

Citation, commencement and revocation

27. These rules may be cited as the Public Use of the Records Rules, 1956, and shall come into operation on the 1st day of July, 1956, in substitution for the Public Use of the Records Rules, 1949(a), which shall as from that day cease to have any effect.

Evershed, M.R.

27th June, 1956.

(a) S.I. 1949/2211 (1949 I, p. 3578).

SCHEDULE

TABLE OF FEES

	£	s.	d.
For the inspection of any document, *per diem*	0	1	6
For the inspection of a number of documents, not exceeding ten, in any one suit, action or matter, *per diem*	0	4	0
For certified manuscript copies:			
for a copy not exceeding five folios of 72 words	1	5	0
for longer copies, *per folio*	0	5	0
[*Copies for certification are normally made by the "Photostat" process, the charges for which are given in the leaflet mentioned in paragraph 22 above: manuscript copies may, however, in appropriate cases be supplied on request, provided that copies of abnormal difficulty will be charged for by the time occupied in copying and examining at the rate of* £1. 1*s.* 0*d. per hour; but this rate will not be charged without previous notice to the person bespeaking the copy.*]			
For certifying "Photostat" or other photographic copies, *per sheet* ...	0	1	0
For making by tracing or for colouring copies of maps, plans, drawings, etc., *per hour*	0	8	0
For attendance at the Royal Courts of Justice or elsewhere to produce records for the purpose of evidence, *per diem*	5	5	0
For attendance on the Master of the Rolls on a *Vacatur*	0	15	0
For vacating, pursuant to the Clerical Disabilities Act, 1870, (Amendment) Measure, 1934, enrolment of a Deed of Relinquishment of Holy Orders	0	10	0

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This Note is not part of the Rules but is intended to indicate their general purport.)

These rules revoke, and re-enact with minor amendments, the Public Use of the Records Rules, 1949. They regulate the hours during which, and the conditions subject to which, certain of the Public Records may be inspected at the Public Record Office. They also regulate the fees charged for inspection, for attendance and for the making or certification of copies.

The principal changes are that the hours of opening and closing for the admission of the public are advanced by half an hour on each day of the week; that searches subject to the payment of fees are discontinued on Saturdays; and that certain of the fees are increased.