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LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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MOULE: OFFICE ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

CONCLUSION

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PREFACE

Module: OFFICE ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

LEARNING OUTCOME

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3. DESIGN OF THE MATERIAL
4. SUBJECT CONTENT
5. CRITICAL OUTCOMES
5. MODULE LAYOUT
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REFLECTION

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LEARNING OUTCOME

After studying this learner's guide, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate a broad understanding of the integratedness of the tasks of the sheriff and office administration and management, service and execution

1. WELCOME

Welcome to Module 1: Office Administration and Management. This module covers office administration and management. We trust you will find working through the module is very interesting and rewarding. We hope that it will add value to your studies in particular, and also to your personal life in general.

Our belief in the importance of a life-long learning culture, allows us to continuously develop learning opportunities that are tailor-made to promote capacity building and thereby allowing you to become, not only a successful sheriff, but also an independent life-long learner.

In terms of the Autonomy of your learning, you are expected to:

- Take personal responsibility and initiative
- Learn within a structured environment
- Critically evaluate your own performance against set criteria
- Identify your own learning needs within defined contexts

2. PURPOSE

The information in this guide reflects the need of the sheriffing community for competencies that will enable you to take responsibility for the serving of documents and execution of judgements within the legal framework within which you operate. In addition, it will improve the quality with which you as a sheriff execute and exercise your duties to enhance the professional image of the sheriffing community, while contributing towards greater confidence in the sheriffs' profession as a core part of the civil justice system.

This course will provide you with opportunities for professional development as a law enforcement officer or as a sheriff.

3. DESIGN OF THE MATERIAL

We followed an outcomes-based approach during the design of this module, which means that, after having worked systematically through the module — doing what is required — you will have achieved some very specific learning outcomes determined by the industry of the sheriff.

These learning outcomes have been broken down into smaller chunks that we call assessment criteria. The assessment criteria appear in the introduction of each module or unit. If you focus on achieving these outcomes as set out in the assessment criteria, you will achieve success.

4. SUBJECT CONTENT

The content is divided into various sections. Once you have worked through it you will be able to:

- Define management and its elements within an organisational context
- Discuss the value of training in the sheriff's profession
- Explain the process of selecting and appointing candidates according to the set criteria
- Identify various documentation relevant to your functions

NB! The sum of the above assessment criteria will be equal to the learning outcome.

The content of this module was put together specifically to guide you through the assessment activities. Do put in the extra effort to consult other sources. You will reap the benefits.

5. CRITICAL OUTCOMES

Other crucial outcomes you also have to achieve, are those we refer to as critical outcomes. These are the outcomes that will help you develop as life-long learners in your studies, work and personal lives. The critical outcomes are summarised as follows:

5.1 Identifying and solving problems in which responses display that responsible decisions, using critical and creative thinking, have been

- made during the:
 - performance of the duty of service
 - utilization of the various manners of service
- 5.2 Working effectively with others as a member of a team or group or organisation or community by:
 - liaising and establishing relationships with stakeholders and community members
- 5.3 Organising and managing oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively by:
 - following processes, procedures and protocols
- 5.4 Collecting, analysing, organising and critically evaluating information to better understand and explain when:
 - gathering information and undertaking research
 - applying relevant laws
- 5.5 Communicating effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written persuasion when:
 - Generating documents
 - Communicating with diverse clients
 - Performing administrative duties
- 5.6 Using science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others when:
 - sourcing information on legislation, policies and procedures
 - using computers where available
 - distributing and administering reports
- 5.7 Demonstrating an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation when:
 - distributing and managing information and reports
 - solving complex problems with a number of actors and factors
 - explaining the relationship between stakeholders and shuffling
 - demonstrating an understanding of cultural diversity in dealing with clients

6. MODULE LAYOUT

Each module comprises the following sections:

- **Introduction**

This serves as an orientation on the particular theme of the chapter.

- **Assessment activities**

A number of assessment activities appear in each module. These activities were designed for evaluation purposes and form part of the learning and teaching strategy. They will assist you to monitor your own progress in achieving the stated outcomes.

The assessment activities will help you to:

- focus on the subject matter
- measure whether and/or to what extent learning outcomes and objectives have been achieved
- measure whether and/or to what extent knowledge, skills, values and attitudes are understood and applied
- present ideas and information in an appropriate format
- stimulate your thinking
- summarise the content

- **Content**

Guides you through the prescribed and recommended material for the subject, and gives explanations of specific concepts and terms that are complex.

- **Reflection**

Here a summary or conclusion to each module is provided.

- **References**

A record of all material and sources that were used during the development of the module appears here. Feel free to consult these sources as well as other relevant sources.

You will be required to engage actively with the content of all material and to record the answers to activities.

Each module begins with the learning outcome and ends with a conclusion. Remember to also consider the assessment criteria as you work through the module and make sure that you reach these.

7. GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS AND ICONS

Where possible, we have included graphic illustrations, mind maps, tables and diagrams to assist you in your learning. We have also highlighted the meaning of certain concepts through the use of specific symbols called icons. The purpose of these icons is to emphasise and draw your attention to important aspects of the work and to highlight activities. The various icons have the following meaning:



Example: This indicates that an example has been given in the text to help you understand the point made, solve similar problems or clear up uncertainties.



Activity: This icon indicates that you must perform an activity. This will help you to think about a particular aspect of the work and to apply or practice it. Performing the activities will help you monitor your own progress towards achieving the assessment criteria.



Reference: This icon refers to previous or other study material, cases or sources that relate to the content with which you are busy.



Reflection: This icon indicates an opportunity to reflect whether you have achieved the assessment criteria.



Definitions: This icon indicates that an important explanation or formula is being given. Study the definitions carefully and take care to interpret them correctly, as this will help to keep you on the right track.



Take note: Additional notes are given for further clarification.

NB! Please study these icons carefully and make sure you can apply them effectively.

**REFLECTION
POINT TO PONDER**

You might want to write a short essay about your understanding of the integratedness of the tasks of the sheriff.

Please do not hesitate to contact your facilitator if you have any problems regarding the content of the subject.

We hope that you will enjoy the challenge of taking an active part in acquiring new skills through this course. Remember one learns best when one enjoys what one is doing.

Most people, looking at a newly-ploughed field, simply see a barren landscape. To a farmer though, this is a sight full of promise. An artist feels the same way about a blank canvas. A musician gets inspired by the silence of an empty hall. What you've got, at the moment, is the perfect space in which to create something.

We wish you success in your studies.

References

1. *South African Board of Sheriffs Learning Guide*. First Edition. Unisa Print Production. Johannesburg. 2003

OFFICE ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT**Learning Outcome**

At the end of this module you should be able to:

- Administrate and manage an office efficiently and effectively

The information presented to you in this unit, as in the other modules, is presented to you in manageable chunks called assessment criteria. This will allow you to work towards achieving the learning outcome, which will be dealt with primarily in terms of the management and administration procedures and systems in the office of the sheriff. After working systematically through the content and activities for this module, you will be able to monitor your progress in achieving the learning outcome. Pay particular attention to the assessment criteria given in each unit.

You should be able to meet the following assessment criteria at the end of this module:

- Defining management and its elements within an organisational context
- Discussing the value of training in the sheriffs profession
- Explaining the process of selecting and appointing candidates according to specific selection criteria
- Identifying various documentation relevant to your functions

By assessing your competencies against the given criteria, you will have achieved the learning outcome intended for this section.

What learning resources do you need?

- This guide
- The Basic Conditions of Employment Act. (The South African Institute's Training Committee has a draft set)
- An English Dictionary

1. INTRODUCTION

Office administration and management reflects the essence of what we will focus on in this unit.

In this module we will indicate the relevant sources to you as well as give practical examples of relevant documentation and real work situations and give you practical hints on being sufficient as a sheriff. Pay attention to all reflective and assessment activities provided. These are aimed at bettering your understanding of office administration and management within the context of the sheriff's office.



REFLECTION

It is interesting to know that the most complaints and claims lodged against sheriffs are not for assault or attaching goods wrongfully, but for complaints and claims.

1.1 Complaints and claims against sherrifs

- Non-participation in the proceeds of sales in execution by concurrent creditors
- Not serving all parties prior to the sale in execution
- Not serving summonses before prescription

Could the above then indicate that the work done by sheriffs and deputy sheriffs is of an acceptable standard, and that the administration done by the office staff is of a lesser standard?

Let's begin with an activity.



ACTIVITY 1

Using a dictionary, look up all the terms/words that you do not know or understand and write it's meaning in the second column of the table. Write the meaning of each term in your own words in the third column.

Term/Word	Meaning	Meaning in your own words
Administration		
Management		
Document validation		
Document registration return		
Inventory		
Plan		
Coordinate		
Control		

Term/Word	Meaning	Meaning in your own words
Evaluate		
Prescription		



Note: It is absolutely crucial that you do the preceding activity. This will allow you to understand and appreciate the environment in which the sheriff operates and help you to complete the unit successfully.

1.2 Office Administration

Now that you have a clearer understanding about the concept of office administration in the sheriff’s context we will discuss the following:

- Checking validity of documents
- Other relevant information
- Receiving letters of complaints
- Receiving payments by post
- Lost documents

Use the following checklist as a guide to proper administration in the office of the sheriff:

1.2.1 Checking validity of documents

- Has the document been issued by the Clerk of the Court?
- Is there a case number?
- Is there a R20 Revenue stamp on the document?
(State Attorney, Receiver of Revenue, State Hospitals exempted)
- Has the service address been completed within a specific jurisdiction?
- Are there sufficient days available for service?
i.e. Ordinary service: 5 days
State: 10 days
Small Claims Court: 10 days
- Have you included the full details of the issuing party (that of the Attorney or Plaintiff)?
- Is this document the original document required in the Magistrate’s Court?

- Are there sufficient copies?
i.e. One ordinarily or five for fixed property
- Are the necessary annexures attached?
- Are the alterations signed by the Clerk of the Court?
- Are all the particulars of the claim inserted?
- Does information appear on the reverse of the summons?

1.2.2 Other relevant information

- Is an Inventory required as per Section 31?
- Instruction must be in writing.
- Have you checked for special requests regarding service
- Is the summons going to prescribe?

1.2.3 Receiving letters of complaints

- If letters are not personally opened by the Sheriff, it should be opened by two members of the staff
- Are all letters that have been received date stamped?
- Are all letters that have been received recorded in a register reflecting the date of receipt, and has the employee who is to attend to the reply been indicated?
- Did you send off a date reply and have you recorded this as well as the manner in which is to be posted/delivered?

1.2.4 Receiving payments by post

- Were envelopes opened in a private office in the presence of two members of staff?
- Did you record any amount received in an envelope on the accompanying letter
- Amounts received in this manner must be recorded in a register distinguishing between Business and Trust Funds, and signed for by the person who issued the receipts?
- Did you bank all moneys received by 14:00 on the same day that you received it?
- Has the register of moneys received been verified on a daily basis with the amount banked?
- Is a Procedure Manual in place for the handling of payments/ cash?

1.2.5 Lost documents

- Do you have preventative measures in place to identify weak spots and rectify them?
- Do you have preventative measures in place that will prevent documents from disappearing in the office?

We will now consider the management of the sheriff’s office in the next section.



2. MANAGEMENT

2.1 What is management?

Management is the co-ordination of functions and tasks to ensure objectives, as contained in the Mission Statement of the company, are met by the application of resources available to the tasks required to be performed.

2.2 Elements of management

Elements of effective management include:

- Planning
- Co-ordination
- Leadership
- Control
- Evaluation
- Every member of staff has a management function — it becomes a bigger part of your job as you progress to higher levels of management

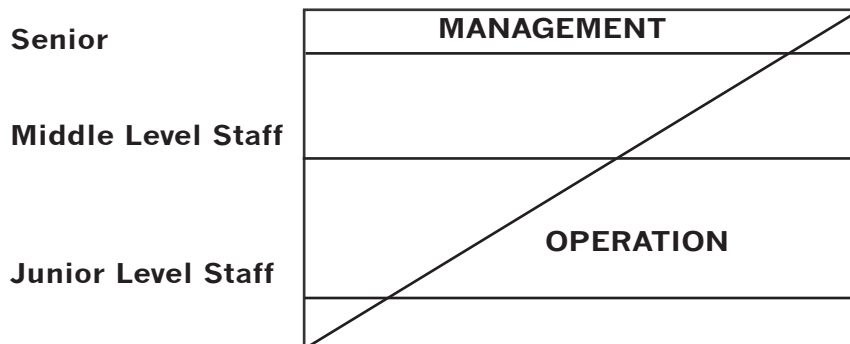


Figure 2.2 Elements of Management

2.3 EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF



Use the example given below in Figure 2.3 to prepare a staff organogram of your office.

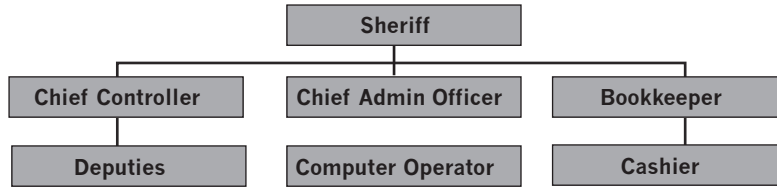


Figure 2.3 A simplified Staff Organogram



Compile Conditions of Employment within the provisions of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act.



Note: The SA Institute’s Training Committee has a draft set.

MISSION STATEMENT

It is important for every office to develop and practice a mission statement. You need to have a clear understanding of what the term means.

A mission statement is a declaration made by a company of its general principles of operation. (The Concise Oxford Dictionary. Ninth Edition. 1995)



Draw up a Mission statement for your office as per the example given below. Each member of the staff must sign it with the Conditions of Employment. Put it up in your reception office and at other strategic places so that the staff is constantly reminded of it.



EXAMPLE:

It is the objective of this office to deal with all the process, orders and documents of the Court, strictly in accordance with the relevant Act and Rules of the Court; To deal with all the documents as expediently as possible and as objective will always attempt to render a return within five working days;

To execute every process to the full and without fear;

To be impartial between the plaintiff and the defendant, always ensuring that the rights of both parties are protected and the one is not favoured beyond the requirement of the process of the court;

To conduct myself in a professional manner in the execution of my tasks with due regard to the Code of Conduct of the Board for Sheriffs, which I support;

Signed

2.3 Job Description

Every position must have a job description as outlined in the following form:

Job Title:
Name of Present Incumbent:
Responsible to:
Overall Purpose:
Delegated Authority:
Main Tasks:
Priorities and Deadlines:
Person Specifications (For recruitment purposes):
Qualifications:
Essential:
Ideal:
Work-based Competences:
Essential in:
Desirable in:
Behaviour competences:



Look at the above checklist and compile a job description with specific reference to the position that you hold in your organisation.

2.3.1 DRESS CODE:

The following are important elements that form part of managing the sheriff's office:

- Office should have a dress code
- Deputies should perhaps have a 'uniform' dress with identification.

2.3.2 PROCEDURE MANUALS:

- The Procedure Manual says who does what when and how
- It should incorporate automatic checks by other staff
- It should have built-in safety mechanisms
- Procedure Manuals should be drawn up for every major task e.g.:
 - Receiving, Handling and Banking of Money
 - Documents for Urgent Service
 - Stores Receiving and Releasing of Goods
 - Attachments – Movable

- Control checks must be made to ensure Procedure Manuals are adhered to and followed. It must also be updated regularly with the approval of the Sheriff.

2.3.3 Staff selection

- Define the Person Specifications for selection purposes;
- Shortlist the applications by eliminating those who does not meet your requirements;
- Applicants interviewed for vacant positions should be tested and Previous employers should be contacted and requested for a reference;
- Use an Evaluation Form where you score applicants objectively and give weights for the different criteria.
- Don't be satisfied with applicants who do not meet your criteria.

2.3.4 Staff training

Have regular training sessions (an hour a week – people like routines);
Encourage staff to come forward with suggestions to work smarter;
Get rid of the “if it works, don't change it” syndrome.

2.3.5 Evaluation

- Is it necessary to check the ‘condition’ of your office on a systematic and regular basis?
- Evaluation is an element in Management.
- Evaluation could be done by a Performance Management Program or a
- Control System, checking certain areas, for example:

2.3.5.1 General Business Condition

Sales for the month to date (first thing every morning, this figure also tells me whether I have lost any data overnight);
Number of documents received – month to date;
Number of registrations done – month to date;

2.3.5.2 Deputies

Deputy's outstanding work report – Twice a Week –
No document is to be with a Deputy for longer than FOUR working days after it was registered;
How many documents is the Deputy handling per day?
In urban areas, he/she should not do less than 25 documents a day and not more than 40 to 50 documents per day;

2.3.5.3 Administration

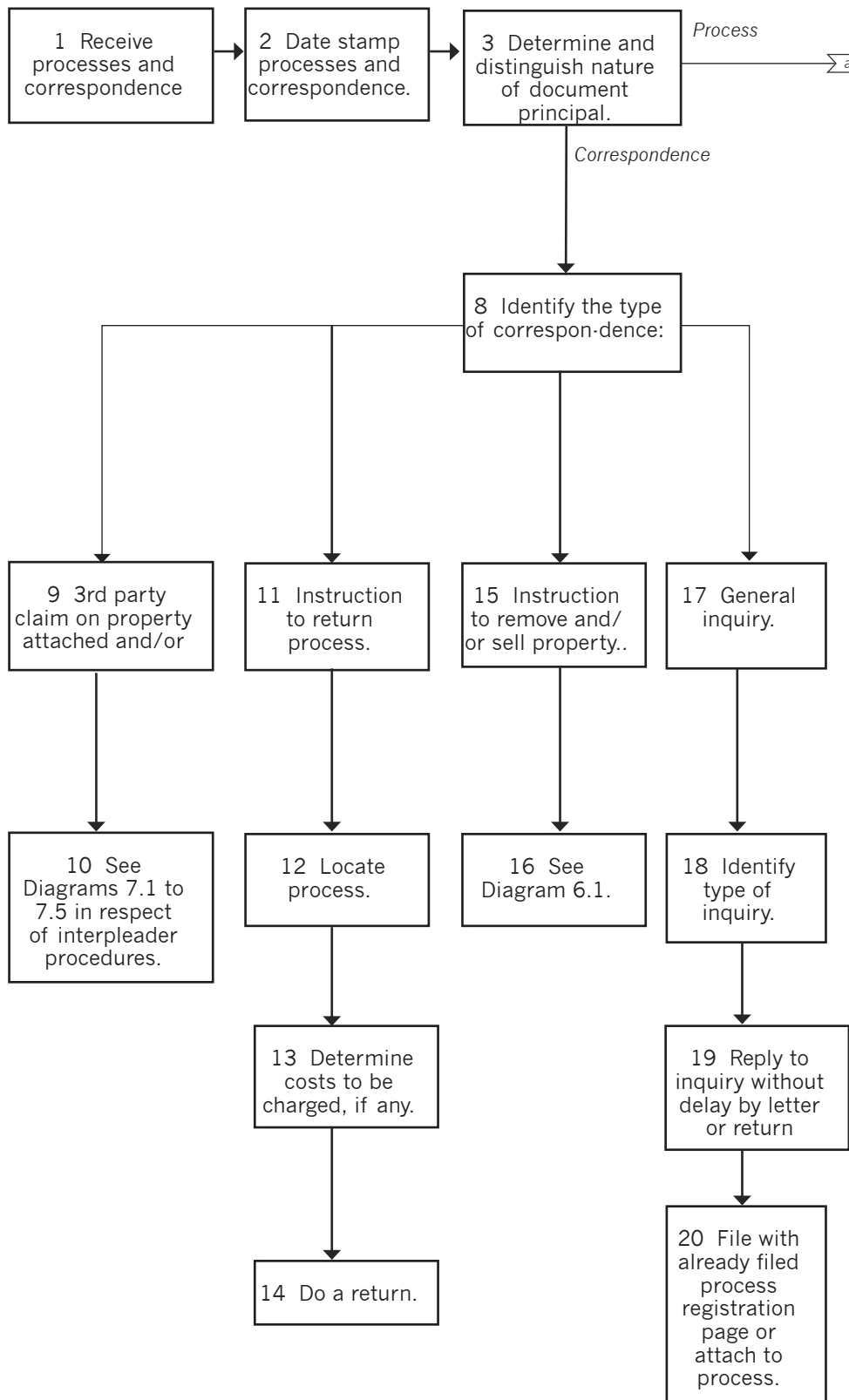
Number of Enquiries received
Debtors Age Analyses – Monthly – Target ratio to previous month's sales is 1:1.5 maximum allowed is 1:1.7
Daily Sales Figures
Value of Credit Notes passed
Mistakes made

CONCLUSION

You have completed this module on Office Administration and management and should now be able to able administrate and manage a sheriff's office efficiently and effectively. In order to monitor your understanding and application of the information contained here, we challenge you to exercise the assessment criteria on an ongoing basis.

We wish you success in your studies.

Diagram 1 – Receipt of documents



continued

Diagram 1 – Receipt of documents (Continued)

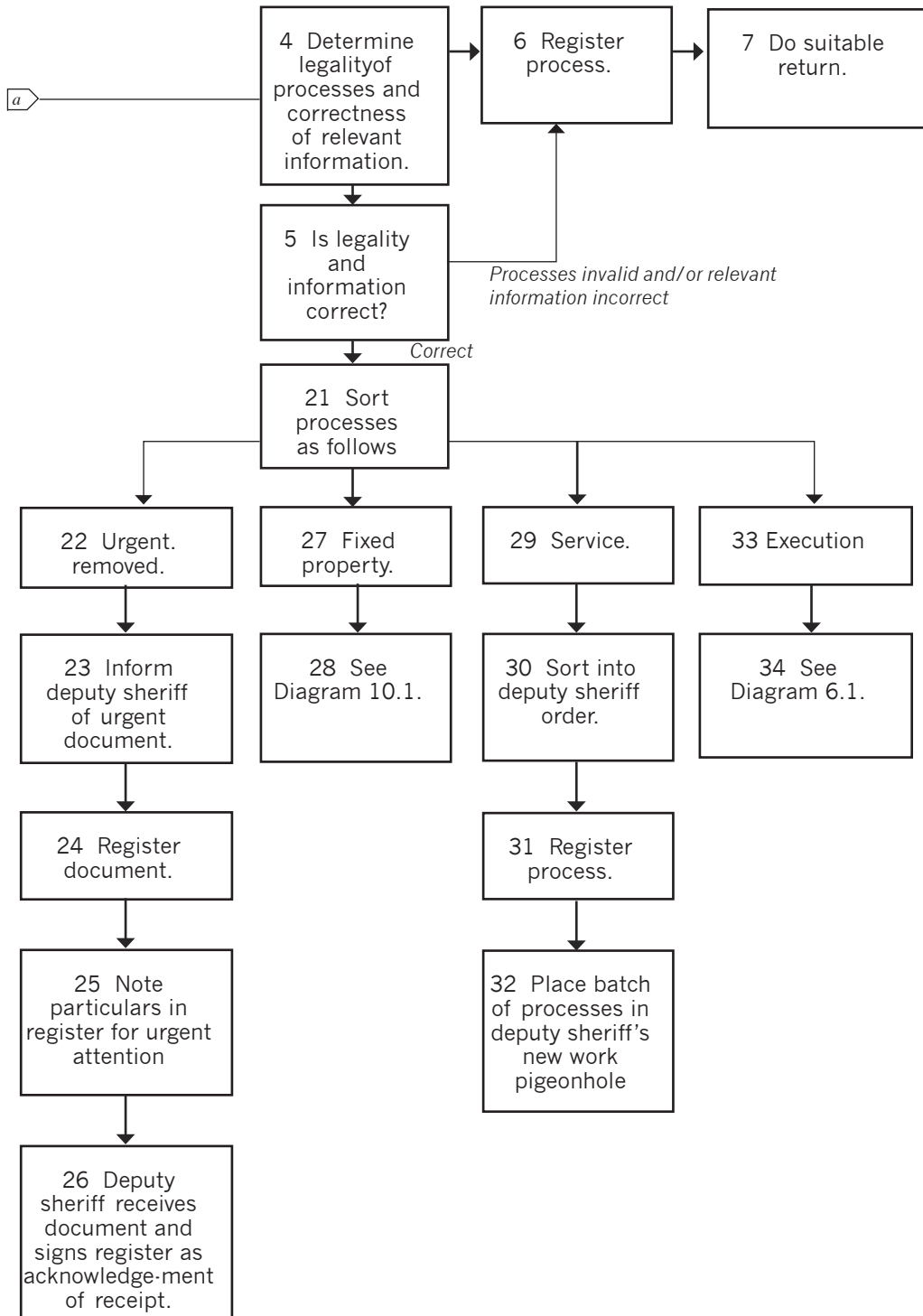
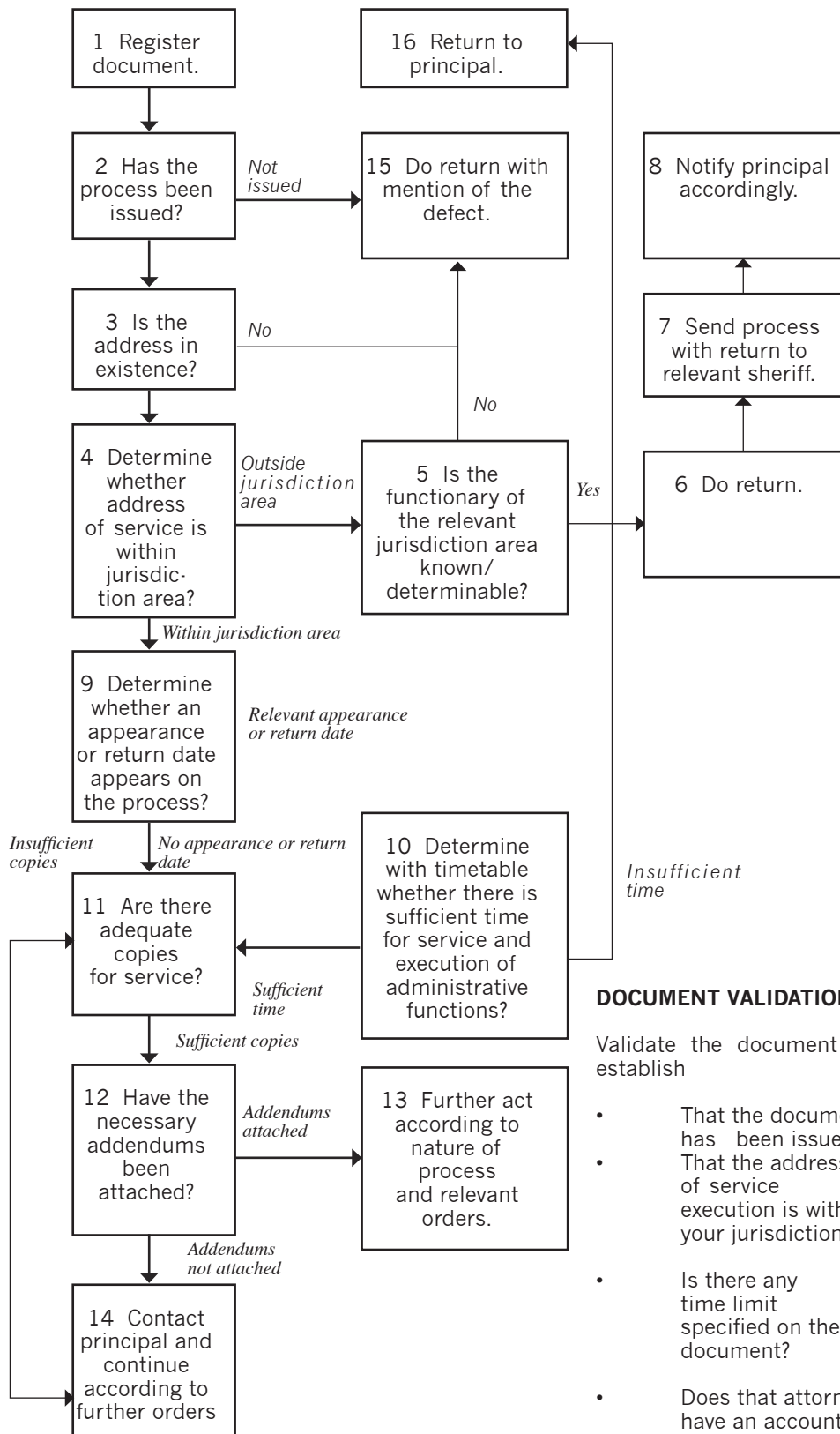


Diagram 2 – Confirmation of legality of processes

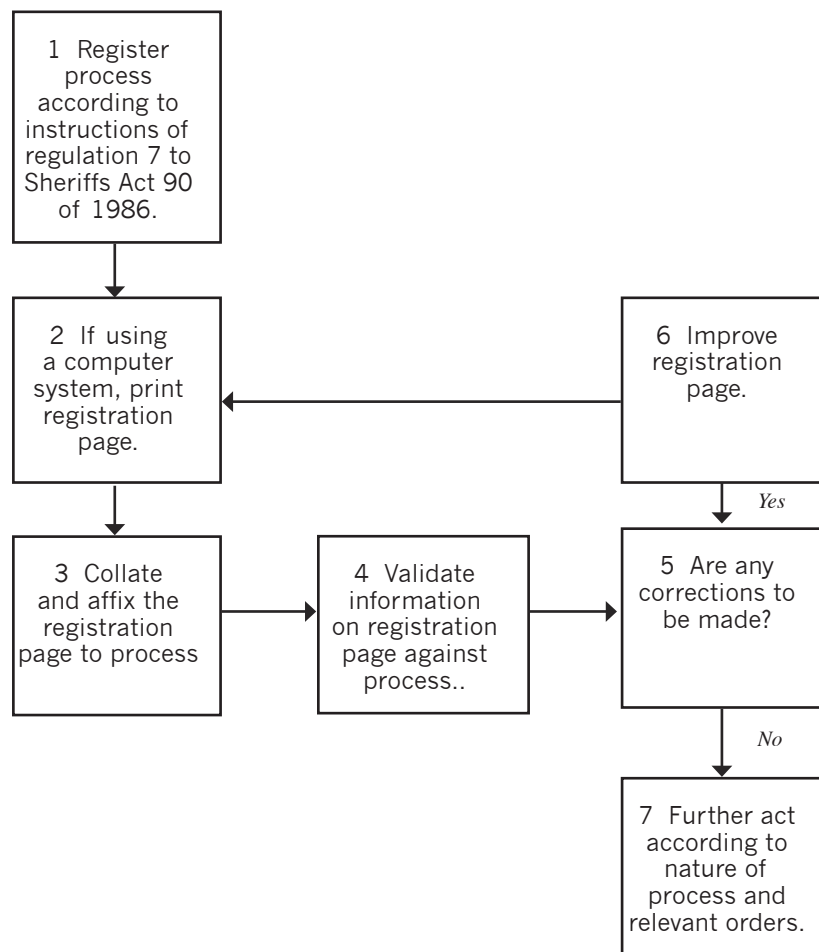


DOCUMENT VALIDATION

Validate the document to establish

- That the document has been issued
- That the address of service execution is within your jurisdiction.
- Is there any time limit specified on the document?
- Does that attorney have an account in good standing with your office?

Diagram 3 – Receipt of documents



DOCUMENT REGISTRATION

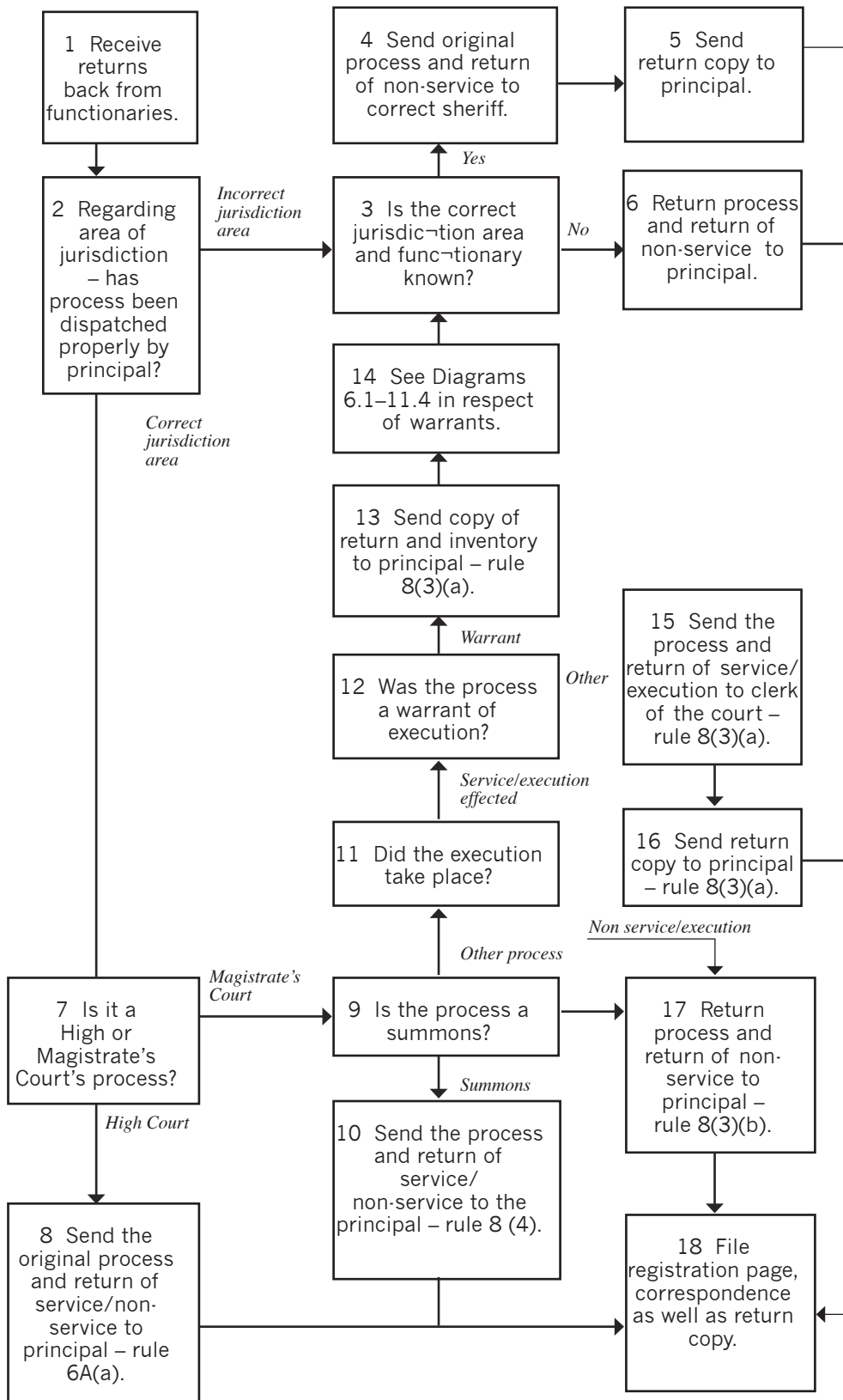
Ensure that the document is registered correctly with regard to:

- Attorney account number
- Courts jurisdiction
- Case number
- Plaintiff
- Defendant
- Address of Service
- Type of Document

Incorrect registration causes problems at a later stage e.g.

- Incorrect account debited
- Document is sent to wrong courts and/or attorney
- Unnecessary inquiry from attorneys
- Delays the whole judicial system

Diagram 5 – Separation of process registration pages, correspondence registration, correspondence and processes – Magistrate Court



Separation of process and process – High Court

