

"Note:- Attention is drawn to paragraph No. 12, which has been further revised."

Confidential

(By order of the Secretary of State, this document is to be treated as most strictly confidential, but the responsible Works Officer should be given the opportunity to study its contents. In any case when a copy is supplied to a Sheriff he is requested to return it to the Prison Governor from whom he received it.)

#### MEMORANDUM OF INSTRUCTIONS FOR CARRYING OUT AN EXECUTION

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1. The trap doors shall be stained a dark colour and their outer edges shall be defined by a white line three inches broad painted round the edge of the pit outside the traps.

2. (a) A week before an execution the apparatus for the execution shall be tested in the following manner under the supervision of the Works Officer, the Governor being present:-

The working of the scaffold will first be tested without any weight. Then a bag of dry sand of the same weight as the culprit will be attached to the rope and so adjusted as to allow the bag a drop equal to, or rather more than, that which the culprit should receive, so that the rope may be stretched with a force of not more than 1,000 foot-pounds. See Table of Drops. The working of the apparatus under these conditions will then be tested. The bag must be of the approved pattern, with a thick and well-padded neck, so as to prevent any injury to the rope and leather. Towelling will be supplied for padding the neck of the bag under the noose. As the gutta percha round the noose end of the execution ropes hardens in cold weather, care should be taken to have it warmed and manipulated immediately before the bag is tested.

(b) On the day before the execution the apparatus shall be tested again as above, the Governor, the Works Officer and the executioner being present. For the purpose of this test a note of the height and weight of the culprit should be obtained from the Medical Officer and handed to the executioner.

3. After the completion of each test the scaffold and all the appliances will be locked up, and the key kept by the Governor or other responsible officer; but the bag of sand should remain suspended all the night preceding the execution, so as to take the stretch out of the rope.

4. The executioner and any persons appointed to assist in the operation should make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the working of the apparatus.

5. In order to prevent accidents during the preliminary tests and procedure the lever will be fixed by a safety-pin, and the Works or other Prison Officer charged with the care of the apparatus prior to the execution will be responsible for seeing that the pin is properly in position both before and after the tests. The responsibility for withdrawing the pin at the execution will rest on the executioner.

6. Death by hanging ought to result from dislocation of the neck. The length of the drop will be determined in accordance with the attached Table of Drops.

7. The required length of drop is regulated as follows:

(a) At the end of the rope which forms the noose the executioner should see that 13 inches from the centre of the ring are marked off by twine wrapped round the covering; this is to be a fixed quantity, which, with the stretching of this portion of the rope, and the lengthening of the neck and body of the culprit, will represent the average depth of the head and

circumference of the neck after constriction.

(b) While the bag of sand is still suspended, the executioner will measure off from the painted line on<sup>1</sup> the rope the required length of drop, and will make a chalk mark on the rope at the end of this length. A piece of copper wire fastened to the chain will now be stretched down the rope till it reaches the chalk mark, and will be cut off there so that the cut end of the copper wire shall terminate at the upper end of the measured length of drop. The bag of sand will<sup>2</sup>

The chain will now be so adjusted at the bracket that the lower end of the copper wire shall reach to the same level from the floor of the scaffold as the height of the prisoner. The known height of the prisoner can be readily measured on the scaffold by a graduated rule of six foot six inches long. When the chain has been raised to the proper height the cotter must be securely fixed through the bracket and chain. The executioner will now make a chalk mark on the floor of the scaffold, in a plumb line with the chain, where the prisoner should stand.

(c) These details will be attended to as soon as possible after 6 a.m. on the day of the execution so as to allow the rope time to regain a portion of its elasticity before the execution, and if possible, the gutta percha on the rope should again be warmed.

8. The copper wire will now be detached, and after allowing sufficient amount of rope for the easy adjustment of the noose, the slack of the rope should be fastened to the chain above the level of the head of the culprit with a pack-thread. The pack-thread should be just strong enough to support the rope without breaking.

9. When all the preparations are completed the scaffold should remain in charge of a responsible officer until the time fixed for the execution.

10. At the time fixed for the execution, the executioner will go to the pinioning room, which should be as close as practicable to the scaffold, and there apply the apparatus. When the culprit is pinioned and his neck is bared he will be at once conducted to the scaffold.

11. On reaching the scaffold the procedure will be as follows:-

(a) The executioner will:-

(i) Place the culprit exactly under the part of the beam to which the rope is attached.

(ii) Put the white linen cap on the culprit.

(iii) Put on the rope round the neck quite tightly (with the cap between the rope and the neck), the metal eye being directed forwards, and placed in front of the angle of the lower jaw, so that with the constriction of the neck it may come underneath the chin. The noose should be kept tight by means of a stiff leather washer, or an india-rubber washer, or a wedge.

(b) While the executioner is carrying out the procedure in paragraph (a) the assistant executioner will:-

(i) Strap the culprit's legs tightly.

(ii) Step back beyond the white safety line so as to be well clear of the trap doors.

(iii) Give an agreed visual signal to the executioner to show that he is clear.

(c) On receipt of the signal from his assistant the executioner will:-

(i) Withdraw the safety pin.

(ii) Pull the lever which lets down the trap doors.

12. The body<sup>3</sup> will<sup>4</sup> be carefully raised from the pit, provided<sup>5</sup> the

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1 The underlined words are struck through in the typescript. Manually inserted instead: "twine wrapped round".

2 Page 1 of the document ends here in the facsimile. The missing part of the sentence is probably: "be then raised from the pit, and disconnected from the rope."

3 Manual insertion: "WILL HANG FOR A MINIMUM OF 45 MINUTES"

provided that the Medical Officer declares life to be extinct. Then the body will be detached from the rope and removed to the place set aside for the Coroner's inspection, a careful record having first been made and given to the Medical Officer of both the initial and final drops. The rope will be removed from the neck, and also the straps from the body. In laying out the body for the inquest, the head will be raised three inches by placing a small piece of wood under it.

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4 Manual insertion: "THEN"

5 Struck through and replaced by "provided": "as soon as"