

PRESS RELEASE

Union Labour Minister inaugurates Special Corporate Office of EPFO

Dattatreya starts EPFO Corporate Office at Bandra

Services of EPFO in corporate environment

Bandra, Mumbai, 29.01.2015:

Sh. Bandaru Dattatreya, Hon'ble Minister of State for Labour & Employment (I/C) today inaugurated the first Special Corporate Office (SCO) of the EPFO at Bandra, Mumbai. EPFO has introduced the concept of Special Corporate Office with a view to provide exemplary and prompt service to a large chunk of its subscribers who are in employment with select big establishments covered under the EPF&MP Act and contributing a significant amount as PF dues. To this end, 16 establishments have been carefully selected for inclusion in the Special Corporate Office. It is expected that such establishments will themselves be model establishments as regards PF work and will in-turn get rewarded with quick, hassle-free and prompt service. The Special Corporate Office is not a separate office but is a sub-office of the existing Regional Office, but shall enjoy functional autonomy to achieve its stated objectives. With this, the efforts are being made by EPFO to provide services to stakeholders, especially employees, in the minimum possible time.

Sh. Dattatreya, while inaugurating the office lauded EPFO for taking this initiative for bringing about greater subscriber satisfaction. He noted that this is the latest in a series of measures taken in the recent past for improving the services offered by the Organisation. He further elaborated that EPFO has engaged CDAC (Centre for Development of Advance Computing), Pune as the technical consultant for ushering in e-governance in all spheres of work.

Shri Prakash Manchhubhai Mehta, Hon'ble Minister of Housing, Mining & Labour, Government of Maharashtra, Smt. Poonam Mahajan, Hon'ble Member of Parliament were present at the function and they appreciated the various initiatives taken by EPFO. Smt. Gauri Kumar, Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Labour & Employment, speaking on the occasion complimented EPFO on the implementation of UAN and desired that necessary seeding of information be done fast.

Union Labour Minister while addressing the media dwelt on various measures taken by EPFO.

(i) Initiatives for Employees:

(ii) Allotment of Universal Account Number (UAN): This initiative for employees was formally launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on October 16, 2014 (16.10.2014) for member portability as well as member identification. Already 4.25 crores members have been allotted Universal Account Number (UAN). Universal Account Number has to be seeded with various KYCs such as Bank Account Number, PAN, Aadhar Card etc. As a result of the sustained drive to seed the UAN with KYCs, 48.19 lakh Aadhar / NPR details, 2.27 crore bank account details, 94.74 lakh PAN details have been captured. The Bank Account number seeding has been made mandatory as the same will facilitate the identification and genuineness of employees in transfer/settlement of their PF Accounts and thereby enhancing the service delivery quality.

- (ii) **Process of settlement made easier:** EPFO has made the process of claim settlement easier. As a result of computerisation, seventy percent of the total claims have been settled within 10 days. The new software for settlement of claims provides for efficient, accessible and timely services to subscribers and employers by creating an environment of transparency and responsiveness which are the essence of all e-governance projects. 99% of the payments are now sent to the bank accounts of the members electronically to prevent delays or frauds.
- (iii) **Member e-sewa account :** Members have been provided facility for viewing their updated pass books, download UAN Card and initiate a transfer claim which are updated on day to day basis which reduces their dependency on their employer to a great extent. Also, the members can now ascertain the balance in their individual Provident Fund Account online. 9.05 crore hits were made on the EPFO's website for balance enquiry. Also available is the facility to check online whether the employer has made contributions in respect of the member every month.
- (iv) **Online Transfer Claim Portal (OTCP):** The OTCP provides for online transfer facility of member's accounts subsequent to change of job or location resulting in smooth, convenient and prompt transfer of PF account of the members. Till date, 3, 04,315 claims have been submitted through this portal.
- (v) **Knowing Claim Status:** The status of the claims can be verified by the members on the EPFO's website. A member can visit the site any time to know the status of the claim. The status is also sent to the member on his registered mobile number by SMS alert at each stage of the claim processing to enable him to keep track of the progress of the settlement. 1.79 crore hits were made on the EPFO's website for knowing the status of the claim.

Initiatives for Employers

- (i) **Online Registration of Employers (OLRE):** Code no. allotment has been made online for greater transparency. The Employers can obtain Code number by registering online on OLRE Portal in the EPFO website and avoid the previously existing system for allotment of code number, involving manual intervention. So far, 29,836 establishments have been allotted code no. online using this facility. Now, on filling up the required format along with online verification of PAN, the code number is automatically generated by the system and the employer may start remittance of the dues.
- (ii) **Online Electronic Challan cum Return (ECR):** Launched in April, 2012, this facility enables employers to submit their returns electronically and remit the contribution online. This has replaced the cumbersome process of filing multiple returns in different reporting periods by the employer and monthly remittance of funds with a completely paperless and hassle free process. The employer has to just file one monthly return and remit the money through the Challan generated. With this the members account is getting credited every month instead of the erstwhile practice of annual updating at the end of the Accounting Year. To facilitate this, E-return Tool has been provided to the employers for assistance in preparing the e-Return which is to be submitted in ECR Portal.

- (iii) **Multi-bank Online contribution:** The ECR (Electronic Challan cum Return) facility has been further improved by the introduction of multiple bank online payment system. The establishments can now remit the statutory dues electronically by online payment (currently available for different 58 banks and efforts are underway to add more banks). Since the introduction of this facility in August 2014, Rs. 9,454 crore have been collected through this medium.
- (iv) **Assistance to Principal Employers to verify the remittance in respect of contract employees:** A facility provided to the members to know the code number of their establishment and to find the EPFO office under which their claim is to be processed. The remittance position of the establishments and the names of the members in respect of whom the employer had remitted the dues is also added to the search facility. Now principal employers earlier dependent on the manual copy of the receipted challan supplied by the contractors can now by themselves verify the payments and names of the members that were employed by them through the contractors. This has empowered the principal employers to keep a check on the contractors.
- (C) **Facility for Exempted Establishments: The** compliance process for PF exempted establishments (who managed their own Provident Funds) has been simplified and automated. Now, such establishments can file monthly statutory returns online.
- (D) **Shram Suvidha Portal:-** This Portal facilitates ease of reporting at one place for various Labour Laws including EPF & MP Act, 1952 , consolidated information of Labour Inspection and its enforcement. The Web Portal enhances convenience of reporting, transparency in Labour Inspection and monitoring of Labour Inspection based on key performances indices and provides an effective Grievance Redressal System hyperlinked with Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) Portal. Inspections are now rule based and system driven. The inspection reports are required to be submitted on line by Inspectors within seventy two hours of conducting the inspection. The Inspection Portal was formally launched on 16-10-2014 by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.
- (E) **Initiative w.r.t. International Workers:** An online facility for international workers for granting of Certificate of Coverage has been launched issuing about 45,000 certificates of coverage facilitating the benefits under provisions of the Employees' Provident Fund & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952. This would help members avoid making social security contributions in countries if they are already covered under the EPF&MP Act and the country in which they are currently deputed to have inked Social security Pacts with India.
- (F) **Online Grievances Handling system:** The Employees' Provident Fund Organization has launched online portal EPF i Grievance Management System (EPFiGMS) to address the grievances of the employer and employees.
- (G) **Accounting System:** The Employees' Provident Fund Organization has entrusted the work of shifting the system of accounting from present single entry accounting system to double entry accounting system to the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India-Accounting Research Foundation.