



No. BSNLCO-A/11(25)/2/2025-ESTAB

Dated: 5th June, 2026

To,

All Heads of Telecom Circles &
All Heads of other Administrative Units of BSNL.

Subject: Implementation of BSNL Sabbatical Scheme-2026 and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for processing of Sabbatical applications – reg.

I am directed to convey the approval of the Competent Authority to implement the BSNL Sabbatical Scheme-2026 along with the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for processing of Sabbatical applications.

2. The detailed provisions governing eligibility, duration of sabbatical, conditions applicable during the sabbatical period, procedure for submission and approval of applications, obligations of employees, and terms of rejoining are contained in the enclosed BSNL Sabbatical Scheme-2026.
3. The enclosed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) shall be followed by all concerned units for processing, examination, recommendation, approval, monitoring, and closure of sabbatical cases to ensure uniform implementation across BSNL.
4. The Scheme shall come into force with immediate effect.

Encl.:

- (i) BSNL Sabbatical Scheme-2026
- (ii) SOP for Processing of Sabbatical Applications

[Signature]
05/06/2026

(Sudhansu Shekhar Ray)
AGM(Estt.I)

BSNL Corporate Office, New Delhi

Copy to:

- i. PPS to CMD, BSNL New Delhi.
- ii. PPS to all Directors BSNL Board.
- iii. CVO BSNL CO, Eastern Court Complex Janpath New Delhi
- iv. Company Secretary/All PGMs/Sr GMs/GMs/Addl. GMs/DGMs BSNL CO.
- v. BSNL Intranet/ Guard file.

BHARAT SANCHAR NIGAM LIMITED

BSNL SABBATICAL SCHEME, 2026

1. Short Title and Commencement

- 1.1. This Scheme shall be called the BSNL Sabbatical Scheme, 2026 (hereinafter referred to as "*the Scheme*").
- 1.2. The Scheme shall come into force from the date of its approval by the Competent Authority.

2. Objectives of the Scheme

The Scheme is intended to enable BSNL for manpower rationalisation and cost optimisation for the Company and to provide a structured mechanism whereby eligible employees may, subject to organisational requirements:

- 2.1. attend to personal, familial or social obligations;
- 2.2. support spouse or dependent family members in their academic, professional or personal pursuits;
- 2.3. pursue self-development, higher education, training or entrepreneurial activities;
- 2.4. explore & take up alternative professional environments, including contractual or overseas assignments;
- 2.5. voluntarily disengage from active service for a defined period without severing continuity of service; and

Nothing contained herein shall be construed as creating any right or entitlement to Sabbatical.

3. Applicability

- 3.1. The Scheme shall apply to regular and permanent below board level employees of BSNL.
- 3.2. The employee must, both on the date of application for Sabbatical and on the date of its approval:


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- not be under suspension;
 - not be undergoing any punishment; and
 - not have any disciplinary or vigilance proceedings pending.
- 3.3. In respect of employees absorbed from other organisations, past service including deputation prior to absorption shall be counted for eligibility.
- 3.4. The Scheme shall not apply to:
- 3.4.1. probationers;
 - 3.4.2. trainees or apprentices;
 - 3.4.3. contractual employees;
 - 3.4.4. temporary or casual employees;
 - 3.4.5. employees on lien or deputation outside BSNL;
 - 3.4.6. employees on deemed deputation/deputation within BSNL.

4. Definitions

For the purpose of this Scheme, unless the context otherwise requires:

- 4.1. **“Sabbatical”** means a voluntary, planned, non-duty period availed under this Scheme, which shall be treated as Extraordinary Leave (EoL) without MC solely for leave accounting purposes; however, notwithstanding anything contained in CCS (Leave) Rules or CCS (Pension) Rules, 2021 or any other service rules, the period of Sabbatical shall not be treated as qualifying service for pension, gratuity or any other service-related benefit.

For the removal of doubt, Sabbatical under this Scheme shall constitute a distinct category of authorised absence created under BSNL policy and the provisions of CCS (Leave) Rules shall apply only for limited leave-accounting purposes and not for determination of any service benefits.

- 4.2. **“Company”** means Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL).

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- 4.3. **“Competent Authority”** means the authority specified under Clause 9 of this Scheme.
- 4.4. **“Controlling Officer”** means the immediate superior officer, as per the approved organisational and administrative hierarchy of BSNL, who is responsible for the day-to-day administrative supervision of the employee in respect of attendance, allocation of work, leave, and performance reporting, and through whom applications under this Scheme are required to be routed.
- 4.5. **“Controlling Unit”** means BA/OA headed by PGM/GM.
- 4.6. **“Employee”** means a regular and permanent employee of BSNL.

5. Eligibility Conditions

- 5.1. An employee shall be eligible to apply for Sabbatical after completion of ten (10) years of regular service.
- 5.2. The employee must have a minimum residual service of two and a half (2½) years as on the proposed date of commencement of Sabbatical.
- 5.3. Sabbatical shall not be admissible beyond the age of fifty-eight (58) years.

6. Duration and Frequency

- 6.1. Sabbatical may be granted for a minimum period of six (6) months and a maximum period of five (5) years.
- 6.2. Extension may be permitted by the Competent Authority, provided that the total period of Sabbatical does not exceed five (5) years.
- 6.3. An employee may avail Sabbatical up to three (3) times during the entire service career.
- 6.4. There shall be a minimum gap of three (3) years between two Sabbatical periods, reckoned from the date of rejoining after the previous Sabbatical.

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7. Procedure for Application

- 7.1. The Controlling Unit shall ensure that not more than 10% of employees of a unit/office (Headed by GM/PGM) are on Sabbatical at any point in time. These limits shall operate as administrative ceilings and not as entitlements.
- 7.2. The employee shall apply for Sabbatical through proper channel at least forty five days in advance of the proposed commencement date.
- 7.3. The employee shall apply in the Application Format, as per **Annexure - I**.
- 7.4. The Competent Authority may, for reasons to be recorded, relax the period of forty five (45) days.
- 7.5. Grant of Sabbatical shall be purely at the discretion of the Competent Authority, having regard to administrative exigencies and organisational interest.
- 7.6. Sabbatical cannot be claimed as a matter of right.
- 7.7. BSNL reserves the right to cancel or defer the Sabbatical approval at any time prior to its commencement in administrative interest.

8. Undertaking

- 8.1. An employee granted Sabbatical shall execute an undertaking accepting all terms and conditions of the Scheme, as per the Format at **Annexure - II**.
- 8.2. The undertaking shall form an integral part of the approval.

9. Competent Authority

Category of Employee (Substantive Level)	Competent Authority
Non-Executives / JTO level	CGM
Executives up to AGM/DE level	Director (HR)
DGM level and above	CMD, BSNL

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10. Status During Sabbatical

10.1. Notwithstanding anything contained in CCS (Leave) Rules or any other service rules, Sabbatical under this Scheme shall constitute a distinct category of voluntary non-duty period and the provisions applicable to Extraordinary Leave (EoL) shall apply only for limited leave-accounting purposes.

10.2. The Sabbatical period shall:

10.2.1. not constitute a break in service;

10.2.2. not count as qualifying service for any service-related benefit. For the avoidance of doubt, in the case of employees governed by CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972, the period of Sabbatical, though treated as EOL for leave purposes, shall not be treated as qualifying service for pension or gratuity. Similarly, in the case of BSNL recruited employees, the period of Sabbatical shall not be treated as qualifying service for gratuity.

Further, for the purposes of Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972, the Sabbatical period shall be treated as a period of authorised absence without wages and shall not be reckoned as continuous service for computation of gratuity.

10.3. No pay, allowances, increments, leave accrual, LTC, any reimbursements, or other benefits shall be admissible during the Sabbatical period.

10.4. Sabbatical shall not be combined with any other form of leave.

10.5. The period of Sabbatical shall not be reckoned towards the residency or eligibility period for any of the following purposes:

10.5.1. Time bound upgradations and Non-Functional (NF) grades under NEPP / EPP / MSRR

10.5.2. Residency or eligibility for post based promotions

Provided that, where an employee otherwise becomes eligible for a post-based promotion after excluding the

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period of Sabbatical, such promotion, if due, shall be given effect only after rejoining the Company, without loss of seniority in the substantive grade and without any claim for pay fixation, arrears, or pay anomaly for the Sabbatical period.

- 10.5.3. Pension or gratuity, which shall be governed by the specific provisions contained elsewhere in this Scheme.

11. Medical Facilities

- 11.1. During the period of Sabbatical, no medical reimbursement or medical facility shall be admissible under BSNL medical rules. The employee may, at his/her discretion & cost, avail medical insurance coverage for self and dependents during the Sabbatical period.

12. Housing and Accommodation

- 12.1. Retention of BSNL accommodation during Sabbatical shall be governed by the same terms, conditions and duration as are applicable for retention of accommodation in the case of retirement, as amended from time to time, and shall not confer or imply any retirement-related status or benefit.
- 12.2. The employee shall be solely responsible for timely payment of all dues including licence fee, electricity, water and maintenance charges during such retention period.
- 12.3. BSNL reserves the right to require vacation of accommodation in accordance with applicable rules.

13. Retirement and Terminal Benefits

- 13.1. Employees governed by EPF and/or Superannuation Pension Scheme (SPS): No pensionary or superannuation benefit shall accrue during the Sabbatical period in the absence of employer and/or employee contribution, as applicable.
- 13.2. Employees governed by CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972: The period of Sabbatical shall not be treated as qualifying service for pension or

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gratuity, the Sabbatical being a voluntary, non-duty period availed under a distinct BSNL policy framework.

- 13.3. For removal of doubt, the Sabbatical period shall not be reckoned for calculation of gratuity under any retirement framework.

14. Employment During Sabbatical

- 14.1. The employee may undertake private or overseas assignments during Sabbatical, subject to disclosure of particulars to BSNL.
- 14.2. The employee may undertake contractual/temporary employment in Government Departments, PSUs, Autonomous Bodies and Statutory Organizations, subject to the existence of enabling provisions in the recruitment rules of such organizations and with prior approval of the competent Sabbatical sanctioning authority.
- 14.3. The employee shall not accept regular employment in Government, Public Sector Undertakings or Autonomous Bodies.
- 14.4. Prior written permission of BSNL shall be mandatory for employment in telecom or allied sectors, or in organisations having business dealings with or competing against BSNL.
- 14.5. The employee shall not engage, directly or indirectly, in any actively, employment, consultancy or business which may create a conflict of interest with BSNL or which may be prejudicial to the commercial or operational interests of the Company.

15. Rejoining and Recall

- 15.1. An employee may seek to prematurely rejoin after completion of six (6) months of Sabbatical by giving one (1) month's notice.
- 15.2. BSNL reserves the right to recall the employee at any time during the Sabbatical period in the interest of the Company, by giving one (1) month's notice.
- 15.3. Place of re-joining and posting
- 15.3.1. An employee may rejoin in the Business Area (BA) within one year of availing sabbatical. If the sabbatical period

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exceeds one year, the employee, other than BA/OA Cadre, shall rejoin at the Circle Office. The employee of BA/OA Cadre may rejoin at the concerned BA.

- 15.3.2. Posting on rejoining shall be decided by BSNL in accordance with administrative requirements.
- 15.3.3. No employee shall have any right to claim posting at the last place of posting or at any place of choice upon rejoining. Rejoining after Sabbatical shall not confer any preferential right in matters of posting or deployment.
- 15.4. In case an employee does not wish to rejoin after Sabbatical period he/she shall have to submit his/her resignation or voluntary retirement (if admissible), he/she may not require to rejoin and no notice period will be insisted upon if the employee has been on Sabbatical for a period of at least three (3) months.
- 15.5. In the event an employee submits resignation or seeks voluntary retirement during the period of Sabbatical, such resignation or voluntary retirement shall be deemed to be effective from the date of start of the Sabbatical. The period of Sabbatical shall not be treated as qualifying service for any purpose. Such resignation shall not be treated as a technical resignation under any circumstances.
- 15.6. In case an employee does not rejoin after availing the Sabbatical period or on recalling by BSNL to join back, the employee shall be deemed to have resigned from the services of BSNL from the date of start of the sabbatical period.

16. Conduct and Discipline

- 16.1. The employee shall not represent BSNL or act in any manner prejudicial to the interests of the Company during Sabbatical.
- 16.2. Sabbatical shall not confer immunity from disciplinary proceedings for any misconduct as per BSNL CDA Rules, 2006, whether prior to or during the Sabbatical period.
- 16.3. Violation of the terms of this Scheme shall attract action under applicable disciplinary rules.

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16.4. The employee shall remain bound by obligations relating to confidentiality, protection of proprietary information, and data security of BSNL during and after the Sabbatical period, and any breach shall attract disciplinary or legal action under applicable rules and laws.

17. Death During Sabbatical

Death during Sabbatical shall be treated as death in service only for settlement of admissible terminal benefits and shall not automatically confer eligibility for compassionate appointment or other service benefits unless otherwise provided under applicable rules.

18. Interpretation and Power to Relax

18.1. Any question relating to interpretation of this Scheme shall be referred to the PGM (Establishment), whose decision shall be final.

18.2. The CMD, BSNL reserves the right to amend, modify, relax, rescind or withdraw the Scheme, in whole or in part, without assigning any reason.

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ANNEXURE – I

APPLICATION FOR AVAILING SABBATICAL

(Under BSNL Sabbatical Scheme, 2026)

(Application to be forwarded through proper channel to the Competent Authority as prescribed in the Scheme)

1. Name of the Employee :
2. HRMS / Employee Number :
3. Designation :
4. Grade / Pay Scale & Basic Pay :
5. Circle / Unit / Office :
6. Whether Executive / Non-Executive :
7. Date of Appointment in BSNL :
8. Date of Superannuation :
9. Total Length of Regular Service (as on :
date of application)
10. Details of Sabbatical availed earlier, if :
any (Period, purpose, and date of
rejoining)
11. Proposed Period of Sabbatical : From _____ To _____
12. Total Duration of Sabbatical :
13. Purpose of Sabbatical : ☐ Personal / Familial / Social
(Tick / specify as applicable) obligations
☐ Support to spouse / dependents
☐ Higher studies / training / self-
development
☐ Entrepreneurial / professional
exploration
☐ Employment elsewhere (contractual /
overseas)
☐ Any other (specify):

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14. Whether any disciplinary / vigilance case : ☐ Yes ☐ No
is pending
(If yes, details to be furnished)

15. Whether any loan / advance / dues are : ☐ Yes ☐ No
outstanding
(If yes, details to be furnished)

16. Address, Mobile Number and E-mail ID during Sabbatical

Address : _____

Mobile : _____

Email : _____

17. **Declaration by the Employee**

I hereby declare that:

- a) I have read and understood the provisions of the BSNL Sabbatical Scheme, 2026 in full;
- b) I am applying for Sabbatical voluntarily and of my own free will;
- c) I understand that Sabbatical is not a matter of right and is subject to approval of the Competent Authority;
- d) I understand that no pay, allowances or service benefits shall be admissible during the Sabbatical period;
- e) The information furnished above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Date: _____

Place: _____

Signature of the Employee

Name: _____

Designation: _____

Recommendations of the Head of Controlling Unit

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ANNEXURE – II

UNDERTAKING BY THE EMPLOYEE

(To be executed before proceeding on Sabbatical)

I, _____ (Name), HRMS No. _____,
Designation _____, presently posted at
_____, do hereby solemnly affirm and undertake as under:

1. That I have voluntarily opted to avail Sabbatical under the BSNL Sabbatical Scheme, 2026, after fully understanding all its provisions.
2. That I acknowledge and accept that Sabbatical:
 - o is a non-duty period;
 - o is treated as Leave Without Pay;
 - o does not constitute a break in service, but
 - o does not confer any entitlement to service benefits.
3. That I clearly understand and accept that during the period of Sabbatical:
 - a) I shall not be entitled to any pay, allowances, increments, leave accrual, LTC, reimbursements or promotional benefits;
 - b) The Sabbatical period shall not count as qualifying service for any service-related benefit.
4. That I understand and accept the position regarding retirement benefits, namely:
 - a) In case I am governed by EPF and/or Superannuation Pension Scheme (SPS), no pensionary or superannuation benefit shall accrue during Sabbatical in the absence of employer and/or employee contribution;
 - b) In case I am governed by CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972, the Sabbatical period shall not be treated as qualifying service for pension or gratuity;
 - c) The Sabbatical period shall not be reckoned for calculation of gratuity under any retirement framework.
5. That I undertake not to accept any regular employment in Government, Public Sector Undertakings or Autonomous Bodies during the Sabbatical period.
6. That I shall seek prior written permission of BSNL before accepting any employment or assignment in the telecom sector, allied services, or in any organisation having business dealings with or competing against BSNL.
7. That I shall not represent BSNL in any capacity, nor act in any manner prejudicial to the interests of the Company during the Sabbatical period.

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8. That I shall keep BSNL informed of my current address, mobile number and e-mail ID during the Sabbatical period and shall be available for communication, if required.
9. That I understand and accept that on expiry of my Sabbatical period, I shall report back for duty in BSNL and that BSNL reserves the right to recall me during the Sabbatical period in the interest of the Company, and I shall comply with such directions. In the event that I fail to report for duty upon recall by BSNL or upon expiry of the Sabbatical period, I shall be deemed to have resigned from the services of BSNL with effect from the date of commencement of the Sabbatical period.
10. That I understand and accept that violation of any condition of the Scheme or this undertaking shall render me liable to action under applicable disciplinary rules.
11. That I shall not claim any right, equity or benefit contrary to the provisions of the Scheme or this undertaking, at any stage.

I make this undertaking voluntarily, without any coercion or undue influence, and with full knowledge of its consequences.

Place: _____

Date: _____

Signature of the Employee

Name: _____

HRMS No.: _____

Designation: _____

Countersigned (by Unit/BA/OA Head)

For and on behalf of BSNL

Name: _____

Designation: _____

Signature & Seal

Date: _____

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BHARAT SANCHAR NIGAM LIMITED
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)
FOR PROCESSING AND APPROVAL OF SABBATICAL
(Issued in pursuance of the BSNL Sabbatical Scheme, 2026)

1. Purpose of the SOP

- 1.1. This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is issued to ensure uniformity, transparency and administrative discipline in the processing of applications for Sabbatical under the BSNL Sabbatical Scheme, 2026.
- 1.2. This SOP is procedural in nature and shall be read in conjunction with the Sabbatical Scheme.

Nothing contained herein shall be construed as creating any right or entitlement to Sabbatical.

2. Submission of Application by Employee

- 2.1. An employee desirous of availing Sabbatical shall submit an application in the prescribed format (Annexure-I) at least forty five days prior to the proposed commencement date.
- 2.2. The application shall be accompanied by a duly signed Undertaking (Annexure-II) as prescribed under the Scheme.
- 2.3. Applications not submitted in the prescribed format or not accompanied by the required undertaking may be returned or rejected at the threshold without further processing.
- 2.4. The application and undertaking shall be submitted through proper channel, i.e., the Controlling Unit / Circle Office.

3. Role of the Controlling Unit (Headed by GM/PGM)

- 3.1. Upon receipt of the application, the Controlling Unit shall verify:
 - a) correctness of the application and service particulars as per ERP system.
 - b) basic eligibility under the Scheme;
 - c) disclosure of purpose and proposed duration.
- 3.2. The Controlling Unit shall not adjudicate upon the merits of the Sabbatical request.
- 3.3. The Controlling Unit shall assess and record:

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- a) current functional responsibilities of the employee;
 - b) broad administrative feasibility of release;
 - c) proposed interim arrangement for continuity of work.
 - d) compliance with numerical limit
- 3.4. The Controlling Unit shall ensure that not more than 10% of employees of a unit/office (Headed by GM/PGM) are on Sabbatical at any point in time. These limits shall operate as administrative ceilings and not as entitlements.
- 3.5. The Controlling Unit shall forward the application, along with a factual and reasoned recommendation, to the Cadre Controlling Unit for further consideration by Competent Authority. In the case of executives of SDE & equivalent and above level, the Circle shall forward the application to BSNL CO.
- 3.6. The recommendation of the Controlling Unit/Circle shall be purely advisory and shall not be binding on higher authorities.

4. Vigilance and Disciplinary Clearance

- 4.1. The Cadre Controlling Authority shall obtain Vigilance Clearance in respect of the applicant.
- 4.2. The Cadre Controlling Authority shall certify that:
- a) no disciplinary or vigilance proceedings are pending or contemplated; and
 - b) no punishment is current against the employee.
- 4.3. Applications failing vigilance or disciplinary clearance shall not be processed further.

5. Role of the Cadre Controlling Unit

- 5.1. For Sabbatical, Cadre Controlling Unit for non-executives & JTO and equivalent level shall be at Circle and for other executives at BSNL CO.
- 5.2. The Cadre Controlling Unit shall examine applications only from an administrative and organisational feasibility perspective, including:
- a) eligibility under the Scheme;
 - b) vigilance and disciplinary status;

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5.3. The Cadre Controlling Unit shall not assess or judge:

- the merit of the employee's purpose;
- speculative organisational benefits;
- future value generation.

5.4 The Cadre Controlling Unit shall ensure that not more than 5% of employees of a cadre are on Sabbatical at any point in time.

6. Timelines

6.1. The following indicative timelines shall be adhered to, as far as practicable:

- Scrutiny, forwarding of application to Circle by Controlling Unit; 10 days
- Scrutiny of Application by Circle Office and forwarding the case to BSNL CO in case when competent authority is in BSNL CO; 10 days
- Decision by the Competent Authority; 15 days
- Communication of decision of the Competent Authority; 5 days
- Relieving and other formalities; 5 days

7. Role of the Competent Authority

7.1. The Competent Authority shall consider:

- a) the provisions of the Sabbatical Scheme;
- b) organisational interest and administrative exigencies.

7.2. The Competent Authority may:

- a) approve the Sabbatical;
- b) reject the application; or
- c) approve with modified duration or conditions.

8. Communication of Decision

8.1. The decision of the Competent Authority shall be communicated to the employee in writing through the Cadre Controlling Authority.

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8.2. The communication shall specify:

- a) approval or rejection;
- b) sanctioned period, if approved;
- c) effective date;
- d) requirement to execute formal undertakings, if not already done.

8.3. Reasons for rejection need not be communicated.

9. Administrative Formalities Prior to Sabbatical

9.1. Before proceeding on Sabbatical, the employee shall:

- a) complete all handing-over formalities;
- b) surrender official assets as applicable;
- c) settle or make arrangements for outstanding dues/advances;
- d) ensure compliance with housing and accommodation rules.

9.2. Payroll, HR and service records shall be updated accordingly.

10. During Sabbatical

10.1. The employee shall comply strictly with:

- conditions of the Sabbatical Scheme;
- restrictions on employment and conduct;
- disclosure and communication requirements.

10.2. BSNL reserves the right to recall the employee in accordance with the Scheme.

11. Rejoining After Sabbatical

11.1. The employee shall intimate the Cadre Controlling Authority at least one (1) month prior to the intended date in the case of premature rejoining.

11.2. An employee may rejoin in the Business Area (BA) within one year of availing sabbatical. If the sabbatical period exceeds one year, the employee, other than BA/OA Cadre, shall rejoin at the Circle Office. The employee of BA/OA Cadre may rejoin at the concerned BA.

11.3. Posting on rejoining shall be decided by BSNL in accordance with administrative requirements.

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12. General Provisions

- 12.1. This SOP shall not override the provisions of the Sabbatical Scheme.
- 12.2. In case of conflict, the provisions of the Sabbatical Scheme shall prevail.
- 12.3. Any clarifications or modifications to this SOP may be issued with the approval of CMD, BSNL.

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