

What are Look Out Circulars (LOCs)?

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About Look Out Circulars (LOCs):

- A LOC is an instrument issued by the government as a **directive to its immigration authorities to restrict** and regulate the **physical movement of a person**.
- The **immigration department** is **tasked to stop** any **such individual** against whom such a notice exists **from leaving or entering the country**.
- Law enforcement agencies often use LOCs as a coercive measure to stop any individual wanted or under suspicion by the police or an investigating agency from leaving or entering the country **through designated land, air, and sea ports**.
- LOCs are **usually issued by the police, intelligence agencies**, or other government agencies **authorised by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.
- LOC **does not have express statutory backing** in legislation, the **power to issue LOCs** and their regulation **stems from the executive** in the form of an **Office Memorandum issued by the MHA** in 2021, which **provides consolidated guidelines** for opening LOCs against Indian citizens or foreigners.
- **Guidelines:**
 - The guidelines categorically provide that LOCs can **only be opened in criminal or penal cases**, and the reason for the LOC must be indicated with the issue of the circular.
 - **If there is no criminal or penal case** pending, the LOC cannot be issued, and **agencies can only request that they be informed of departure or arrival**.
 - However, the guidelines provide that **in exceptional cases**, an LOC may be **issued** against an individual **even when the case is not a criminal case**. This is in specified circumstances, **such as when it is detrimental to the “sovereignty, or security, or integrity of India”, the “bilateral relations with any State”, or to the “strategic and economic interests of India”**.

- LOCs are also **permitted in cases** where the individual is likely to engage in **terrorism or offences against the State** or when **such departure** would **not be “in the larger public interest”**.
 - LOCs **cannot be issued unless basic details** — including name/parentage, passport number, and date of birth — **are available**, and such requests must be constantly monitored.
 - It is the **responsibility of the originator to constantly review the LOC requests** and proactively provide additional parameters to minimise harassment to genuine passengers.
 - It is also required that any **LOC issued must be reviewed on a quarterly and annual basis by agencies that request** such restrictions, and the result of the review must be **informed to the MHA**.
 - **MHA** has categorically **transferred the legal consequences** of issuing an LOC **to the originating agency**, even though such OMs are issued by the Bureau of Immigration.
 - **The power to issue** such OMs and LOCs is **sourced from The Passports Act, 1967**, the key legislation for the grant of passports, travel documents, and “endorsements” to travellers at the time of emigration or immigration.
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Q1: What is Immigration?

Immigration is the process of moving to a new country or region with the intention of staying and living there. People may choose to immigrate for a variety of reasons, such as employment opportunities, to escape a violent conflict, environmental factors, educational purposes, or to reunite with family. Business travelers and foreign students, for example, typically do not qualify as immigrants even though they spend time in a foreign country.

Source: [Why High Court said banks can't stop debtors from going abroad](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/look-out-circulars/>

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