

FLOWCHARTS

For many applications, a simple list of the steps that comprise an algorithm is sufficient for stating the problem in a clear and unambiguous manner; however, when procedure is complex and different options exist, then a list of instructions is hard to follow. For describing a complex process, a flow diagram (or flowchart) is prepared. *A flowchart is a diagram, prepared by the programmer, of the sequence of steps, involved in solving a problem. It is like a blueprint, in that it shows the general plan, architecture, and essential details of the proposed structure. It is an essential tool for programming and it illustrates the strategy and thread of logic followed in the program. It allows the programmer to compare different approaches and alternatives on paper and often shows interrelationships that are not immediately apparent.* A flowchart helps the programmer avoid fuzzy thinking and accidental omissions of intermediate steps.

Flowcharts can be divided into 4 categories as below and as such they may be likened to the geographical map with regard to the extent of detail:

1. System outlines charts (Global map)
2. System flowcharts (National map)
3. Run flowcharts (State map)
4. Program flowcharts (District Map)

Source: ICAI's Study Material for PCC

