



Treasury Board of Canada
Secrétariat

Secrétariat du Conseil du Trésor
du Canada

Canada

Policy on Communications and Federal Identity

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as represented by the President of the Treasury Board, 2016

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Policy on Communications and Federal Identity

i Note to reader

The *Federal Identity Program Manual* referenced in requirement 6.10 is in the process of being replaced by the *Design Standard for the Federal Identity Program*. During the transition, some sections of the manual remain in effect. Details are available in the manual.

1. Effective date

- 1.1 This policy takes effect on May 11, 2016.
- 1.2 This policy replaces the following Treasury Board policies:
 - o Communications Policy of the Government of Canada (August 1, 2006)
 - o Federal Identity Program Policy (October 1, 1990)

2. Authorities

- 2.1 This policy is issued pursuant to section 7 of the Financial Administration Act.
- 2.2 The President of the Treasury Board has the delegated authority to approve the use of the arms of Canada instead of the flag symbol in corporate signatures for institutions whose heads report directly to Parliament, as well as for institutions that have quasi-judicial functions.
- 2.3 The Secretary of the Treasury Board has the delegated authority to amend and rescind the mandatory procedures related to this policy.

3. Application

- 3.1 This policy and its supporting instruments apply to departments and other portions of the federal public administration as set out in Schedules I, I.1 and II of the Financial Administration Act, unless excluded by specific acts, regulations or orders in council.
- 3.2 The organizations listed below are not required to use the Canada wordmark and are not subject to requirements 6.1 and 6.5 of this policy:
 - o Office of the Auditor General of Canada
 - o Office of the Chief Electoral Officer
 - o Office of the Registrar of the Supreme Court of Canada
 - o Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada
 - o Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages
 - o Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner of Canada
 - o Offices of the Information and Privacy Commissioners of Canada

The heads of these organizations are solely responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with this policy within their organizations.

4. Context

- 4.1 Communications are central to the Government of Canada's work and contribute directly to the Canadian public's trust in their government. The government communicates with the public in both official languages to inform Canadians of policies, programs, services and initiatives, and of Canadians' rights and responsibilities under the law. The government also has a responsibility to communicate with Canadians to help protect their interests and well-being, and to promote Canada as a prosperous, diverse and welcoming country.
- 4.2 The Government of Canada considers the views of Canadians when developing policies, programs, services and initiatives. In order to have an effective and open dialogue with an increasingly diverse Canadian public, the government uses innovative digital tools and online platforms.
- 4.3 Government communications must be objective, factual, non-partisan, clear, and written in plain language. The communications function entails more than simply providing or receiving information. The way in which the government delivers its communications affects the value of the information, how it is received by the public, and the credibility of its source. Tailoring messages to specific audiences increases the impact of how the information is received.
- 4.4 Canadians increasingly use technology to communicate in their daily lives, and expect to interact with the government in the same way. Using new communications approaches that stem from the rise of digital technologies, balanced with using traditional methods, enables the Government of Canada to reach and engage with Canadians effectively and efficiently in the official language of their choice, regardless of where they reside.
- 4.5 The communications function is integral to developing, implementing and evaluating the government's policies, programs, services and initiatives. The administration of communications is a shared responsibility that requires the collaboration, support and cooperation of various personnel within individual departments, throughout government as a whole, and across the country.
- 4.6 The corporate identity of the Government of Canada is managed through the Federal Identity Program (FIP). A unified federal identity that is applied consistently across all departments ensures that the public can easily recognize the Government of Canada and its programs, services, facilities, assets, activities and uniformed officials. FIP supports the principle of government accountability by clearly identifying areas of federal responsibility and the allocation of public funds.

5. Objectives and expected results

5.1 Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to ensure the following:

- 5.1.1 Government of Canada communications are non-partisan, effectively managed, well coordinated, clear and responsive to the diverse information needs of the public.
- 5.1.2 The Government of Canada considers the views and interests of the public when developing policies, programs, services and initiatives.
- 5.1.3 The Government of Canada is visible and recognizable to the public in Canada and abroad, and is projected equally in both official languages.
- 5.1.4 Government of Canada communications and the administration of its corporate identity are cost-effective and achieve savings through standardization.

5.2 Expected results

The expected results of this policy are as follows:

- 5.2.1 Communications within and across departments are well coordinated and integrated into all government operations.
- 5.2.2 Government communications products and activities are timely, accurate, clear, objective, non-partisan, cost-effective, in both official languages, and meet the diverse information needs of the public.
- 5.2.3 Government engages with Canadians and uses innovative methods when developing policies, programs, services and initiatives.
- 5.2.4 Communications, programs, services, activities, initiatives and assets are clearly identified in Canada and abroad.
- 5.2.5 The Government of Canada's identity is applied consistently, projected equally in both official languages, has primacy over the identity of individual departments, and is not overshadowed by other logos.

6. Requirements

Deputy heads are responsible for the following:

- 6.1 Providing impartial advice and support to their minister, who is the principal spokesperson for the department, in communicating government policies, programs, priorities and decisions to the public;
- 6.2 Designating a senior official as head of communications to manage communications and corporate identity;
- 6.3 Enabling communications with the public about policies, programs, services and initiatives by ensuring that their department:
 - 6.3.1 Provides timely, clear, objective, factual and non-partisan information;
 - 6.3.2 Provides information in both official languages in accordance with the relevant sections of the Official Languages Act;
 - 6.3.3 Considers the needs of official language minority communities in Canada;
 - 6.3.4 Uses a variety of media and platforms to maximize reach, including seeking innovative ways to use technology;
 - 6.3.5 Meets the requirements of the Standard on Web Accessibility and provides published information on request that is substantially equal for people with disabilities;
 - 6.3.6 Considers the views and interests of the public when developing policies, programs, services and initiatives; and
 - 6.3.7 Responds to information requests or inquiries from the public promptly without undue recourse to the Access to Information Act.
- 6.4 Integrating communications into their department's emergency preparedness and crisis management planning;
- 6.5 Collaborating with other departments on government-wide communications activities and initiatives;
- 6.6 Ensuring that all their department's communications activities support the Government of Canada's principles of open government and its practices;
- 6.7 Approving annual advertising and public opinion research plans;
- 6.8 Approving advertising during general federal elections: that is required by statute or regulation for legal purposes; to inform the public of a danger to health, safety or the environment; to post an employment or staffing notice; or to undertake specific advertising that is deemed urgent; and

- 6.9 Championing open, transparent and collaborative communications within their departments to foster employee knowledge and awareness of departmental and government-wide priorities.

Federal identity

Deputy heads are responsible for overseeing the administration of the Government of Canada's corporate identity by ensuring that their departments carry out the following:

- 6.10 Apply the Government of Canada's official symbols in all media, platforms, products, material, equipment and real property in Canada and abroad, in accordance with the [Design Standard for the Federal Identity Program](#) and the [Federal Identity Program Manual](#);
- 6.11 Adopt an applied title and abbreviation in both official languages, approved by their minister and the President of the Treasury Board;
- 6.12 Use the department's applied title or the title "Government of Canada" in all of the department's communications products and activities;
- 6.13 Obtain Treasury Board approval to replace the department's official symbols or to add an additional identifying symbol to their corporate identity;
- 6.14 Include the Government of Canada's corporate identity requirements in agreements for leased buildings and facilities; and
- 6.15 Ensure that the Government of Canada's official symbols are not applied in instances where national security, surveillance operations or workplace safety are likely to be negatively affected.

7. Consequences of non-compliance

- 7.1 For an outline of the consequences of non-compliance, refer to the Framework for the Management of Compliance ([Appendix C: Consequences for Institutions](#) and [Appendix D: Consequences for Individuals](#)).

8. Roles of other government organizations

The roles and responsibilities of other government organizations are set out in the Directive on the Management of Communications.

9. References

9.1 Legislation

- [Access to Information Act](#)
- [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)
- [Canadian Multiculturalism Act](#)
- [Financial Administration Act](#)
- [Official Languages Act](#)
- [Official Languages \(Communications with and Services to the Public\) Regulations](#)
- [Privacy Act](#)
- [Public Service Employment Act](#)
- [Trademarks Act](#)

9.2 Related policy instruments

- [Directive on the Management of Communications](#)
- [Directive on Official Languages for Communications and Services](#)
- [Directive on Official Languages for People Management](#)
- [Directive on Open Government](#)
- [Directive on Service and Digital](#)
- [Policy on Internal Audit](#)
- [Policy on Official Languages](#)
- [Policy on Results](#)
- [Policy on Service and Digital](#)
- [Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector](#)

10. Enquiries

For answers to questions about this policy instrument, contact [Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat Public Enquiries](#).

Appendix: Definitions

advertising (publicité)

Government of Canada advertising is defined as any message conveyed in Canada or abroad and paid for by the government for placement in media, including but not limited to newspapers, television, radio, cinema, billboards and other out-of-home media, mobile devices, the Internet, and any other digital medium.

applied title (titre d'usage)

The official name of a department that is used in communications with the public and in its corporate signature.

arms of Canada (armoiries du Canada)

Formally known as the Arms of Her Majesty The Queen in Right of Canada or the Arms of His/Her Majesty in Right of Canada, and also referred to as the Canadian coat of arms and the royal arms of Canada. The arms of Canada is an official symbol of the Government of Canada. A stylized one-colour rendering of the arms of Canada is used to identify departments whose heads report directly to Parliament, institutions that have a quasi-judicial function, ambassadors, heads of consulates or missions, and the Clerk of the Privy Council.

Canada wordmark (mot-symbole « Canada »)

The global identifier of the Government of Canada, which is composed of a graphically modified typeface and the flag symbol.

corporate identity (image de marque)

The unified manner in which an organization, company or public sector entity identifies its presence and activities. A corporate identity can include elements such as nomenclature, symbols, colour, typography and standards for graphics. The Government of Canada's corporate identity is prescribed by the Federal Identity Program.

corporate signature (signature visuelle)

The combination of the department's approved English and French applied title and the flag symbol or the arms of Canada.

deputy head (administrateurs généraux)

For the purpose of this policy, deputy heads include all deputy ministers appointed to departments and other portions of the federal public administration as set out in Schedules I, I.1 and II of the Financial Administration Act.

Federal Identity Program (FIP) (Programme fédéral de l'image de marque (PFIM))

The corporate identity of the Government of Canada that ensures that departments, programs, services, assets and activities are clearly identified to the public in Canada and abroad through the consistent use of departmental titles and symbols.

flag symbol (symbole du drapeau)

The flag symbol is a graphically modified version of the National Flag of Canada. The flag symbol is protected under the laws of Canada, and internationally under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.

logo (logo)

A graphic mark, emblem or symbol adopted by an individual or organization to aid or promote recognition. Logos can be purely graphic or can feature the name of the organization in a special typeface (e.g., logotype).

non-partisan communications (communications non partisans)

In the context of all Government of Canada communications products and activities, “non-partisan” means:

- Objective, factual and explanatory;
- Free from political party slogans, images, identifiers; bias; designation; or affiliation;
- The primary colour associated with the governing party is not used in a dominant way, unless an item is commonly depicted in that colour; and
- Advertising is devoid of any name, voice or image of a minister, member of Parliament or senator.

official symbols of the Government of Canada (symboles officiels du gouvernement du Canada)

The Canada wordmark, the flag symbol, and the arms of Canada.

plain language writing (rédaction en langage clair et simple)

Writing that is easily understandable on first reading. Communicating in plain language may involve writing to a specific level of literacy or education.

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