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Equality of English and French *Makes Good Business Sense!*

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Federal Government - Official Languages

Gouvernement fédéral - Langues officielles

Making Official Languages a
priority in our daily operations



Canada

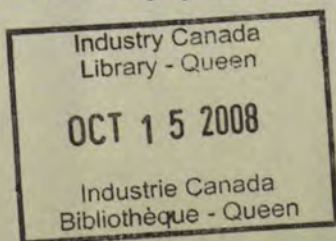


Message from our *Official Languages Champion*

As Industry Canada's Official Languages Champion, I am responsible for promoting greater awareness of the Official Languages Program and making official languages a priority in our daily operations. In order to fulfill our mission and to foster a growing Canadian economy, we must be able to work with Canadians from all economic sectors and from all regions of the country. It makes good business sense. Ensuring that businesses operating in either official language have the same access to Departmental programs helps us meet our objectives more effectively.

One of my most important responsibilities is to ensure that, as a federal institution, we comply with the *Official Languages Act* by:

- serving Canadians in their preferred official language with courtesy and respect in designated bilingual offices;
- allowing employees in designated bilingual regions to use their preferred official language at work (subject to serving internal or external clients);
- offering all Canadians, whether English- or French-speaking, equal opportunities for employment and advancement;



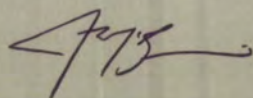
Makes Good Business Sense!

- enhancing the vitality of Anglophone and Francophone minority communities; and
- recognizing both English and French in Canadian society.

The language rights of Canadians are entrenched in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and clearly set out in the *Official Languages Act*. Linguistic duality is a fundamental value of Canadian society.

The Human Resources Branch, Official Languages Unit has produced this brochure as part of its official languages campaign to increase awareness of language rights and obligations among Industry Canada management and staff. Official Languages Policy often prompts enquiries from managers and employees and, although this brochure cannot cover every aspect of the Official Languages Policy, it answers the most frequently asked questions.

I am confident that through our continuous commitment we will succeed in ensuring that official bilingualism is fully recognized and implemented at Industry Canada.



John McBride

Communications with and Services to the Public – Part IV of the *Official Languages Act*

Which federal offices are required to provide services in both official languages?

The official language rights of the public are embedded in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The obligations of public institutions to provide services in both English and French are among the most fundamental legal requirements that govern the public service.

The *Official Languages Act* and its Regulations specify the regions where services must be provided in English and French. For full text versions of the Act and Regulations, go to <http://icinfra.ic.gc.ca/officiallanguages> and select your choice from the menu on the left.

How can I serve clients effectively in their official language?

Where services are provided in both official languages, appropriate measures must be taken to inform the public that they may be served in their official language of choice. In the following situations you should:

Visual Greeting (In person)



Ensure that the official languages symbol is clearly displayed and properly directs clients to where they can be served in both official languages.

Verbal Greeting (In person)

- Greet clients in both official languages.
- Use the official language spoken by the majority of residents first and the other official language second. Continue to speak in the official language chosen by the client.
- Ensure that any documentation you give your client is in his or her chosen official language.

On the Telephone

- Always answer the telephone in both official languages.
- Use the official language spoken by the majority of residents first and the other official language second.
- Continue to speak in the official language chosen by the client and ensure that any documentation used is in the same language.

What do I do if I'm not bilingual?

- Keep a list of bilingual employees close at hand;
- Inform your client that you are referring him or her to a bilingual colleague;
- Give your client the name of your colleague and, if necessary, his or her phone number; and
- Inform your colleague of the client's language of choice.

For a list of all federal government offices that provide services to the public go to: <http://icinfra.ic.gc.ca/officiallanguages> and select Burolis from the menu on the left. This list specifies which offices have an obligation to serve the public in both official languages.

Language of Work – Part V of the *Official Languages Act*

Where can employees use either official language as the language of work?

The *Official Languages Act* specifies regions where federal employees have the right to work in the official language of their choice. These regions are known as bilingual regions for language of work. They are:

- the National Capital Region;
- New Brunswick;
- parts of Eastern and Northern Ontario;
- the Montréal area;
- parts of the Eastern Townships of Quebec; and
- parts of the Gaspé and Western Quebec.

For a detailed listing of cities and towns in these regions, go to <http://icinfra.ic.gc.ca/officiallanguages> and select TBS Official Languages Policies from the menu on the left.

What are the language of work obligations of federal institutions in bilingual regions?

1n order to create a work environment where employees feel free to work in the official language of their choice, the following services must be offered in both official languages:

- Staff supervision. Employees who hold bilingual positions or positions requiring the use of French or English must receive instructions and performance evaluations in the language of their choice. Supervision of employees occupying unilingual positions is done in the language of the position.

- Documents for current or general use produced by or for Industry Canada (for example, policies, manuals of directives or employee publications).
- Current and generalized computer systems, including software, training and user manuals, acquired or produced on behalf of Industry Canada.
- Central and personnel services, regardless of the duties or the language requirements of the positions.
- Intra- or interdepartmental staff or committee meetings when employees from both language groups are in attendance.

Furthermore, senior management must be able to function in both official languages (for example, conduct meetings, accept documents, and listen to presentations).

What is management's role in creating a work environment in which employees are encouraged to use their preferred official language?

Senior Management

Senior managers provide leadership in official languages matters and ensure that Industry Canada meets its official languages responsibilities. They must:

- inform employees of their rights and responsibilities;
- ensure that language preferences are respected;
- allow employees to work in their official language; and
- provide second-language training and development opportunities.

Managers and Supervisors

Managers and supervisors play a key role, as their attitudes set the tone for their units. They must:

- communicate with employees in the employees' first official language;

- encourage employees to work in their chosen language or to improve their second-language skills;
- provide performance appraisals and career development training in the employee's official language;
- encourage the use of both official languages at meetings;
- create opportunities for employees to work together in both official languages, such as on special project teams; and
- make every effort to improve their own second-language skills.

How do language of work rights mesh with the rights of the public to be served in their official language of choice?

The public's right to be served in their official language of choice takes precedence over the language of work rights of employees in bilingual positions.

How can I encourage bilingualism in the workplace?

As an employee, you can play an important role in promoting bilingualism. For example, you can make it a habit to use your own official language when communicating with managers or bilingual colleagues from the other language group. This way, you not only exercise your language of work rights, but also give your colleagues the opportunity to develop their second language.

You can also improve your second language by talking with colleagues from the other language group in their official language.

Who can I contact if I believe that my language of work rights are not being respected?

If you believe your language rights are not being respected, you should raise the question with your supervisor or manager, or contact Industry Canada's Human Resources Branch, Official Languages Unit at (613) 954-3697 to try to resolve the issue internally. If you cannot resolve the problem internally, you can contact your regional Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

What happens if I lodge a complaint with Industry Canada's Human Resources Branch, Official Languages Unit?

Unless you authorize the disclosure of your identity, your complaint is handled confidentially. All complaints are investigated. If your complaint is valid, your supervisor or manager will be contacted and asked to prevent the situation from recurring and ensure that remedial action is taken. You will be kept informed of the progress and results of the investigation.

Participation of English-Speaking and French-Speaking Canadians – Part VI of the *Official Languages Act*

Does equitable participation mean that there are positions reserved for each language group?

No. Regardless of ethnic origin or first language learned, English- and French-speaking Canadians have equal opportunities to obtain employment for which they are qualified, and equal rights to

career development opportunities in the Canadian federal public service. Industry Canada's work force must represent both linguistic groups equitably in each employment group, but this equitable representation must be based on merit.

Advancement of English and French – Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*

What is Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act*?

Section 41 states that “The Government of Canada is committed to:

- (a) enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting in their development; and
- (b) fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society.”

What is Industry Canada doing to support Section 41?

Industry Canada has prepared a multi-year action plan in support of Section 41, as well as an annual achievement report. These documents include national and regional initiatives based on the needs of official language minority communities. They are available at <http://www.ic.gc.ca/epublications>

Following an evaluation and an awareness campaign in 2000-01, Industry Canada has developed a strategy to be implemented by the Department and by Industry Portfolio agencies responsible for promoting regional development.

The strategy has three stages: (1) direct communication with official language minority communities (OLMCs); (2) research and analysis to learn more about OLMCs and what Industry Canada could do to better meet their needs; and (3) enhance existing programs and services to maximize community participation.

What can I do to support the development of OLMCs?

One of our objectives is to increase OLMCs participation in Industry Canada's programs and services. This means ensuring that the needs and realities of OLMCs are considered when we develop and when we deliver policies, programs and services. By keeping the needs of OLMCs in mind as you carry out these functions, you will be supporting their development.

Official Languages Contacts

For information on the Official Languages Program, help with policy interpretation (Part IV, V and VI of the *Official Languages Act*), or to discuss your language rights, contact the Human Resources Branch, Official Languages Unit at (613) 954-3697.

For specific advice on Sections 41 and 42 (Part VII) of the *Official Languages Act*, call (613) 941-2471.

You can also visit the Human Resources Branch, Official Languages intranet site at: icinfra.ic.gc.ca/officiallanguages