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## **Official Languages - Language of Work Quick Reference Guide**

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# Official Languages - Language of Work

## ***Lesson 1: The Basics***

The ability of employees to work in their official language of choice is subject to the government's duty under the *Official Languages Act* to offer and provide services in the official language chosen by the public.

The Government of New Brunswick recognizes that employees make an often-superior contribution when they are able to work in their official language of choice. Therefore, a work environment must be created within the New Brunswick Public Service that promotes the use of employees' official language of choice.

The Language of Work Policy applies to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development; except for divisions of the Department which have been established on the basis of only one official language. It does not apply within schools and school district offices.

The policy also applies to the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour; however, it does not apply to individual community colleges which have been established on the basis of only one official language.

The Minister of Treasury Board is responsible for the overall administration of the Official Languages - Language of Work Policy and Guidelines.

Individual Deputy Ministers and Deputy Heads are responsible for the day-to-day application and management of the policy within their respective organisations.

The Treasury Board is responsible for monitoring the application and for providing interpretation and advice in the administration of the Language of Work Policy and Guidelines.

## ***Lesson 2: Language of Work in the Workplace***

In order to help create a work environment that is conducive to the use of both official languages, every effort must be made to ensure that the following be provided in the official language chosen by the employee:

- Personnel and Administrative Services
- Performance Reviews
- Supervision and Communication
- Drafting Documents
- Work Tools
- Meetings

Personnel and other administrative services to employees must be offered in both official languages and provided in the official language chosen by the employee. Such services include, but are not limited to:

- Payroll and benefits services
- Counseling services
- Staffing services
- Training
- Appeal and grievance procedures
- Miscellaneous personnel administrative services

Performance reviews must be offered and conducted in the employees' official language of choice.

Day to day communications between a supervisor and an employee must be in the official language chosen by the employee.

Supervisors who have the ability to communicate in both official languages must do so by using their employees' official language of choice.

If a supervisor cannot communicate in the official language chosen by the employee, he must ensure that processes are in place to facilitate the employees request to communicate in their preferred language.

Employees can draft documents in the official language of their choice. Exceptions would include:

- Documents being prepared on an urgent basis or at the request of ministerial staff must be provided in the language requested. "Urgent basis" is defined as when time frames do not allow translation by translation bureau.
- Documentation of client files must be done as per departmental guidelines. Departments who maintain client files have existing policies in relation to documentation of client files. These are governed by various factors such as the nature of the file, professional codes of conduct and language of service obligations

Documents must be fully translated once ready for broader circulation or when seeking comments and feedback. When requesting translation services, departments must follow the Translation and Interpretation Services policy and guidelines and ensure that the time required for translation of documents is built into the project timeframe.

Small meetings must be held in a manner that encourages the use of both official languages.

For large meetings, both official languages must be used at all time. This can be accomplished by using: Simultaneous interpretation; Bilingual facilitators; English and French co-chairs or by conducting separate meetings in either official language.

The "Tool Kit" is a reference site that has been developed to assist managers and employees. It provides tools and examples to encourage and enable employees to work in their official language of choice.

### ***Lesson 3: Communication in the Workplace***

Anyone from a department or agency who is communicating with a central agency should feel comfortable using their official language of choice.

Central agencies have a responsibility to use the official language chosen by the clients in the provision of service to and in contact with client departments and agencies.

Departments and agencies may use either official language when communicating with central agencies. Communication from the central agency must be in both official languages.

While the communication flow to the head offices from the divisions, branches or regional offices may be in either official language, communication from the head office to the divisions, branches or regional offices must be in both official languages.

Replies by head offices must be in the official language chosen by the division, branch or regional office.

As well, all general communication directed at all employees (e.g. new departmental policy, notice of annual meeting, etc.) must be in both official languages.

Regional offices have a responsibility to use the appropriate official language in the provision of all services to and in all contacts with subordinate offices.

Subordinate offices may use either official language when communicating with regional offices. Replies by regional offices must be in the official language chosen by the subordinate office.

All general communication directed at all employees (e.g. new departmental policy, notice of annual meeting, etc.) must be in both official languages.

When there is no central agency/head office or regional office context, employees who are communicating with each other must do so in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Language of Service policy. If an employee receives a request from another employee, the response must be in the official language chosen by the employee who is requesting the service or information.

## ***Lesson 4: Understanding what Linguistic Capacity and Required Language Skills Entail***

Institutional Linguistic Capacity – Institutions must have the linguistic capacity to serve the public, employees, regional and subordinate offices in both official languages. They must be equipped with a team of employees who are ready to actively offer services of equal quality in both official languages.

Linguistic Capacity of Employees – In order to fulfill institutional linguistic obligations, employees must have the required language skills to perform their responsibilities.

Required language skills – Employees are able to communicate in English or in French, or in both official languages to the level required to carry out their duties.

Teams are composed of a mixture of employees with varying linguistic capabilities. The teams are able to offer services in either official language as needed.

Teams that are in constant contact with the public, provide specialized services, or work in areas with a balanced linguistic mix, will require a higher capacity in both official languages.