

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

WHAT ARE MY LINGUISTIC ENTITLEMENTS IF I WORK IN A BILINGUAL REGION?

You are entitled to:

1. ...receive personal services in the OL of your choice (includes pay and benefits services, career and personal counselling, Employee Assistance Program
2. ...receive central services in the OL of your choice (includes administrative, library, financial, and technical services),
3. ...access regularly and widely used work instruments in the OL of your choice (includes forms, manuals, instructions, and directives),4)...access regularly and widely used information systems in the OL of your choice (includes hardware (eg, bilingual keyboards) and software (eg, MS Word, MS Outlook, and Internet)),
4. ...access regularly and widely used information systems in the OL of your choice (includes hardware (eg, bilingual keyboards) and software (eg, MS Word, MS Outlook, and Internet)),
5. ...receive supervision in the OL of your choice (applies only if you are an incumbent of a position with language requirements identified "bilingual" or "either/or"),
6. ...participate at conferences and meetings in the OL of your choice (agendas, minutes, and follow-up communications must also reflect the equal status of the two official languages),
7. ...submit formal grievances and have them dealt with in the OL of your choice (grievances may be filed in the OL of your choice, regardless of the language designation of your position or unit) , and
8. ...receive training and development in the OL of your choice (this includes any training required to fulfill your present job-related responsibilities or developmental courses for future assignments.



WHAT CAN I DO IF I FEEL MY LANGUAGE RIGHTS HAVE BEEN INFRINGED?

If you believe your language rights have been infringed, you should first bring the matter directly to the attention of the alleged offender if this possible. If this is not possible or results in unsatisfactory corrective action being taken then discuss the matter with your supervisor or your Official Languages Advisor. As a last resort, under Section 58 (2) of the Official Languages Act, you may register a formal complaint with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

ARE SEPARATE ENGLISH AND FRENCH LANGUAGE VERSIONS OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS PERMITTED?

Whenever both official languages are required in written communications, English and French text may be separate as long as both versions are available at the same time. A notice should also be placed within unilingual versions indicating that the text is available in the other official language.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FINAL ACCURACY AND QUALITY OF DOCUMENTS PRODUCED IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES?

The originator of any document is always responsible for the final accuracy and quality of any document produced in both official languages. When the originator of a document does not have the expertise or resources to ensure the quality and accuracy of translations, translators within their organization can help.

WHAT IS "MIXED READERSHIP"?

Within bilingual regions, mixed readership refers to a distribution list for a communication which contains addressees with language of work rights different from those of other addressees. If there are addressees with a different language of work than others, then the communication must be sent in both official languages.

An originator of a communication may limit its initial distribution to only a few addressees. The originator's intention however may be for initial addressees to carry out a broader-scale secondary distribution which involves a mixed readership. In this case, the originator must ensure the communication is sent in both official languages to the initial addressees.

DOES THE RIGHT TO WORK IN THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF MY CHOICE PREVAIL OVER THE RIGHT OF THE PUBLIC TO BE SERVED IN THEIR PREFERRED OFFICIAL LANGUAGE?

Section 31 of the Official Languages Act states that whenever there is a conflict, the right of members of the public to be served in their preferred official language will prevail over your right to work in the official language of your choice.

HOW DO YOU DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT A POSITION SHOULD BE IDENTIFIED BILINGUAL?

To begin with, Section 91 of the Official Languages Act makes it perfectly clear that the language requirements must be objectively determined and reflect operational needs and realities. Language requirements are determined, for the most part, based on the duties, responsibilities, and contacts established for each position. For example, is the position required to provide a service to the public, supervision, or internal services in both official languages?

More information on determining language requirement of positions will be forthcoming shortly.

DOES 'EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION' MEAN THAT JOBS MUST BE SET ASIDE FOR EACH LINGUISTIC GROUP?

Absolutely not, the federal government stands fast to the principle of selecting personnel based on merit. The use of quotas or targets to achieve equitable participation objectives is strictly prohibited.

WHO IS THE "PUBLIC"?

The term public, for purposes of Part V of the Official Languages Act, refers to any person or group of persons (professional associations or others) or organization or company (other than a Crown corporation), in Canada or abroad; or any representative of another level of government (eg, municipal or provincial) who deal with The Canadian Forces Personnel Support Agency (CFPSA).

DO ALL "SIGNS" HAVE TO BE BILINGUAL?

Signs which do not deal with safety, security, health, or a unit's identification can be displayed in English only in English Language Regions and in French only in French Language Regions.

To promote work environments conducive to the use of both official languages, all signs within Bilingual Regions must be displayed in both official languages. Whenever possible and appropriate, graphic symbols rather than written text should be used to convey messages.